MOBY-DICK

THIRD
NORTON
CRITICAL
EDITION

HERMAN MELVILLE

Edited by Hershel Parker

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Hershel Parker, H. Fletcher Brown Professor Emeritus, University of Delaware, is author of the two-volume *Herman Melville: A Biography* and *Melville Biography: An Inside Narrative.* He was one of the original editors of *The Norton Anthology of American Literature* and is coeditor of the Norton Critical Edition of Herman Melville's *The Confidence-Man.*

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A NORTON CRITICAL EDITION

Herman Melville
MOBY-DICK

AN AUTHORITATIVE TEXT
CONTEXTS
CRITICISM

THIRD EDITION

Edited by

HERSHEL PARKER
UNIVERSITY OF DELAWARE, EMERITUS

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Contents

List of Illustrations ix
Preface xi
Acknowledgments xvii
Map: Principal Ports of Southeastern New England (Mid-1800s) xviii
Map: Melville's Voyages and the Route of the *Pequod*, 1841–44 xix

The Text of *Moby-Dick; or, The Whale* 1
CONTENTS OF *MOBY-DICK* 3
ETYMOLOGY 6
EXTRACTS 7
MOBY-DICK 16
EMENDATIONS 411

Contexts 419
Hershel Parker • Glimpses of Melville as Performer 421
WHALING AND WHALECRAFT 429
Glossary of Nautical Terms 429
John B. Putnam • Whaling and Whalecraft: A Pictorial Account 438
Contemporary Engravings 446
BEFORE *MOBY-DICK*: INTERNATIONAL CONTROVERSY OVER MELVILLE 455
Gansevoort Melville • [A Compliment to Tennesseans—and a Tribute to Andrew Jackson] 460
Anonymous • [An American Sailor on the Missionaries] 461
Anonymous • [A Bewitching Work] 462
Captain E. Knight • [Gansevoort Melville on the Strategic Importance of Oregon] 464
[Nathaniel Hawthorne] • [Melville's "Freedom of View" (Not "Laxity of Principle")] 464
Anonymous • [A Unique Eyewitness] 465
Margaret Fuller • [A Challenge to the Sewing Societies] 466
Anonymous • [Happy Dog: Herman in the Typee Valley] 467
Henry T. Cheever • [A Prurient Book, That Preys on the Imagination] 468
Anonymous • [Melville's Moral Obtuseness] 469
William O. Bourne • *Typee*: The Traducer of Missions 470
Anonymous • [Melville and Missionary Fund-Raising—A Review of *Omoo*] 474
[Thurlow Weed?] • Who Reads an American Book? 475
Anonymous • [Melville's Spite against Religion and Its Missionaries] 475

"B." • [Polynesian Cannibalism *vs*. American Slavery] 476
Horace Greeley • Up the Lakes, 8 June 1847 [The *Tone* Is Bad] 477
[George Washington Peck] • [Melville as Sexual Braggart] 479
William O. Bourne • [Traducer of Loftier and Better Men] 482
William O. Bourne • [Melville's Encouraging of "Rum and Romanism"] 483
Anonymous • [The Total Failure of Protestant Missionaries] 483
E. B. H[all] • Catholic and Protestant Missions 488
[William Gilmore Simms?] • [Review of *Mardi*] 490
Anonymous • [Civilized Bodies, Barbarous Souls] 491
Anonymous • [The Improving Condition of "Live Cargo"] 491
Anonymous • [A Magisterial Caution from "Maga"] 491
Anonymous • [The "Middle Passage" for the Irish] 494
Anonymous • [Melville: Prejudiced, Incompetent, and Truthless] 495
Anonymous • [Unfortunate Mr. Melville] 497
[Evert A. Duyckinck] • [A Defense against the "Anti-Popery Mania"] 498
[Evert A. Duyckinck] • [*White-Jacket* and a Warning to Melville] 499
Anonymous • [A Jibe at "The Essential Dignity of Man"] 499
SOURCES OF AND INFLUENCES ON *MOBY-DICK* 501
Hershel Parker • Melville's Reading and *Moby-Dick*: An Overview and a Bibliography 501
J. N. Reynolds • Mocha Dick: Or the White Whale of the Pacific 510
Herman Melville • [The Captain and Crew of the *Acushnet* on Melville's Voyage] 526
Owen Chase • [The *Essex* Wrecked by a Whale] 527
Herman Melville • [Manuscript Notes on Owen Chase] 532
Herman Melville • [Review of J. Ross Browne and Captain Ringbolt] 536
The Original of Queequeg: Tupai Cupa's Self-Portrait 542
Hershel Parker • *Moby-Dick* and Melville's Notes in His Shakespeare 543
Herman Melville • Hawthorne and His *Mosses* 544
MELVILLE'S LETTERS AT THE TIME OF *MOBY-DICK* 559
To Richard H. Dana Jr., May 1, 1850 560
To Richard Bentley, June 27, 1850 561
To Evert A. Duyckinck, December 13, 1850 562
To Evert A. Duyckinck, February 12, 1851 562
To Nathaniel Hawthorne, [April 16?], 1851 564
To Nathaniel Hawthorne, Early May 1851 566
To Nathaniel Hawthorne, June 29, 1851 569
To Richard Bentley, July 20, 1851 570
To Nathaniel Hawthorne, July 22, 1851 571
To Sarah Huyler Morewood, September 12 [or 19?], 1851 572
To Evert A. Duyckinck, November 7, 1851 572
To Nathaniel Hawthorne, November 17, 1851 573
To Sophia Peabody Hawthorne, January 8, 1852 575

Criticism 577
REVIEWS OF *The Whale* AND *Moby-Dick* 579
Anonymous • [The Whole Powers of the Man] 579
Anonymous • [A Credit to His Country] 580
Anonymous • [An Ill-Compounded Mixture] 581
Anonymous • [A Singular Medley] 583
Anonymous • [People Who Delight in Mulligatawny] 585
Anonymous • [A Most Extraordinary Work] 585
Anonymous • [Fascination No Criticism Will Thwart] 587
Anonymous • [No Fayaway in It. Alas!] 588
Anonymous • [Not Worth the Money Asked for It] 588
"H." • [A Primitive Formation of Profanity and Indecency] 589
Anonymous • [Not Lacking Much of Being a Great Work] 590
[Horace Greeley?] • [Melville's Whaliad, the Epic of Whaling] 593
[Evert A. Duyckinck] • [A Friend Does His Christian Duty] 594
Anonymous • [Too Much for Our Money] 597
Anonymous • [Information: The Only Redeeming Point] 597
A. Oakey Hall • [A Book Which Enhances Melville's Fame] 598
[George Ripley?] • [A Pregnant Allegory . . . Illustrating the Mystery of Human Life] 599
[Augustus K. Gardner?] • [Fresh and Buoyant as Ever] 600
Anonymous • [A "Many-Sided" Book] 601
Edward Forbes • [Purposeless and Unequal Doings] 603
Anonymous • [Talent Perverted] 605
Anonymous • [A Strange, Wild Book] 605
[William A. Butler] • [A Prose Epic on Whaling] 606
Anonymous • [Pristine Powers and Old Extravagance] 608
Anonymous • [A Most Agreeable and Exciting Work] 612
Anonymous • [Mr. Melville Has Survived His Reputation] 612
[William Gilmore Simms?] • [Grounds for a Writ *de Lunatico* against Melville] 613
Francis Jacox • [A Strange, Wild, Furibund Thing] 614
AFTERMATH OF *MOBY-DICK* 617
Hershel Parker • Damned by Dollars: *Moby-Dick* and the Price of Genius 617
BELATED PRAISE AND THE MELVILLE REVIVAL: 1879–1927 633
Gath [George Alfred Townsend] • [A Future President Explicates *Moby-Dick*] 633
Anonymous • [A Marvellous Odyssey] 634
Archibald MacMechan • The Best Sea Story Ever Written 635
William Livingston Alden • [Let Us Have a Melville Society] 642
Louis Becke • [The Strangest, Wildest, and Saddest Story] 643
"A Wayfarer" • [A Deposition from a New Reader] 643
Christopher Morley and H. M. Tomlinson • [*Moby-Dick*: "The Immense Book of the Sea"] 644
Hershel Parker • Melville's British Admirers: "Passing on the Torch" 646

LITERARY CRITICISM 663
Walter E. Bezanson • [The Dynamic in *Moby-Dick*: Ishmael's Voices] 663
Harrison Hayford • "Loomings": Yarns and Figures in the Fabric 667
MOBY-DICK IN THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY 679
Greil Marcus • [A Single Phrase Can Bring a Hundred Pages Back] 679
Timothy Marr • Kraken: *Moby-Dick* in Popular Culture 681
Mary K. Bercaw Edwards and Wyn Kelley • Melville and the Spoken Word 686
Robert K. Wallace • *Moby-Dick* and the Arts in the Early Twenty-First Century 692
Jonathan Lethem • *Moby-Dick* 701
Roger Payne • Melville's Disentangling of Whales 702

Selected Bibliography 705

Illustrations

Map: Principle Ports of Southeastern New England (Mid-1800s)	xviii
Map: Melville's Voyages and the Route of the *Pequod*, 1841–1844	xix
Dedication to Nathaniel Hawthorne	2
Elevation and Plan View of a Typical Whaleship	438
Whaling Bark under Sail	439
Whaleboat Slung from Davits	440
Details of Rigging	440
Lapstrake (Clinkerbuilt) Construction	441
Plan View of a Typical Whaleboat	442
Elevation of a Typical Whaleboat	442
Whaleboat under Sail	443
Irons and Lances	443
Men on Boat Stripping Whale Carcass	444
Tools of the Trade	445
"There She Blows!"	446
Struck on a Breach	447
Lancing	448
Boat Destroyed by a Whale	449
In the Whale's Jaw	450
Bailing the "Case"	451
"Cutting In"	452
Trying Out	453
The Original of Queequeg: Tupai Cupa's Self-Portrait	542
Qiao Xiaoguang, *The Story of Moby-Dick*	694
Aileen Callahan, *Breaching Coil*	696
Matt Kish, *Extract 14*	700

Preface

In the preface I wrote for the second Norton Critical Edition of *Moby-Dick* I described Melville as a Romantic writer (slightly belated, and American), who was profoundly influenced from his youth by the lives and writings of international literary celebrities such as Lord Byron, Sir Walter Scott, Goethe, and Washington Irving, and later by Wordsworth, Coleridge, and others, including many now little read, such as the poet laureate of his youth, Robert Southey. Melville was also a child of the American Revolution (grandson of two military heroes who had known George Washington and other notables) and of the War of 1812 (then still vivid in the American consciousness). Even more crucially, I said, Melville was a child of the cataclysmic French Revolution and of Napoleonic Europe. In the post-Napoleonic era of Melville's youth, Americans obsessively followed such remote events as the Greek struggle for independence from the Turks and marveled at the indirect consequences of military action. Everyone knew that one basalt hunk of war booty from Napoleon's invasion of Egypt, the Rosetta Stone, had allowed a heroic French civilian to decipher the hieroglyphics and initiate the study of ancient Egypt (of fervent if limited interest to many religious Americans as the home of the Hebrews from Joseph to Moses). Archaeological excavations, at Pompeii and elsewhere, were transforming historical and aesthetic knowledge of the classical world of Greece and Rome as decisively as the deciphering of the hieroglyphics was transforming knowledge of ancient Egypt. *Moby-Dick* is laced with offhand allusions to such recent events, not just military, political, and religious but also scientific, including advances in the study of archaeology, geography, oceanography, and astronomy. Advances in anatomy and geology were already creating pre-Darwinian evolutionary thought and challenging religious chronologies that set the creation of the world around 5000 B.C.E.

More than a third of a century after 1967, I continued, when the first edition of the Hayford-Parker Norton Critical Edition (NCE) was published, the United States was once again in a recurrent phase of thinking globally, as Melville was doing in *Moby-Dick* even while many Americans were using the Monroe Doctrine to justify isolationism. Early in the twenty-first century, Americans are concerned as never before with the effects human beings have on their environment, from immediate surroundings to the entire planet Earth. Many of the geopolitical themes Melville dealt with from his own experience—Pacific Rim commerce, colonialism, deliberate or careless destruction of indigenous cultures and environments, exploitation of nature, racism, enslavement, immigration—are themes uppermost in minds of many modern Americans. In recent years Roger Payne, the author of *Among Whales*, and other marine biologists are learning how whales feed, reproduce, communicate, and migrate,

and how they are being pushed toward extermination. In the new environmental activism, the Sea Shepherd movement founded by Paul Watson is dedicated to saving whales, now threatened not only by commercial whaling fleets but also by global pollution. Knowing about newly defined dangers (*global warming* was not in the national vocabulary in the 1960s), we think differently about extinction of species and read such chapters in *Moby-Dick* as 105, "—Will he Perish?," differently from the way earlier generations did.

Such worries, I went on, about extinction of species, loss of rain forests, pollution (of land, air, and water), human overpopulation, global warming, the possibility of world famine—all these and other concerns have been accompanied by a new interest in tales of high adventure: escapist outer-space adventure at one extreme and, at another, stringent earthly challenges such as climbing the highest mountains and exploring the depths of the oceans. Once again the reading public is fascinated with retellings of dangerous nineteenth-century voyages such as the search for the Northwest Passage and equally hazardous commercial ventures such as whaling voyages. In particular, new readers have been found for retellings of the story of the destruction of the *Essex* by a whale and the price some of the crew paid for survival. (Not since the time of *Moby-Dick* has the dark subject of cannibalism resonated so variously and so perturbingly in the public consciousness as it does now.)

Once written about as if it were on a subject that could be of interest to only some men and no women or as if it were a book of philosophy trying to be a work of literature, *Moby-Dick* is now more popular than ever with all ages and sexes as the greatest sea story ever told, recognized as a national literary treasure arising from the deeply troubled mid-nineteenth century. Turning away from the notion of good literature as something that makes you feel good about yourself just as you are, readers are welcoming *Moby-Dick* as evidence that good literature has the power to challenge, exalt, and even transform. So much I wrote early in 2001, and waited to see it in print.

At noon on Monday, September 10, 2001, FedEx delivered my first copy of the second Norton Critical Edition of *Moby-Dick*. The rest of the day I reveled in the splendor of the cover and happily sampled what was inside. What happened the next day deflected the way *Moby-Dick* was being taught in American colleges and written about in academic journals, even while it liberated artists, musicians, filmmakers, audiobook readers, genre-mixing adaptors, novelists, and other creative folk to seize on the book as the only American epic fit to rework with their own sometimes rough magic. Whether or not 9/11 was directly responsible, common readers in astonishing numbers and frequency increasingly began to come together in companionable groups (and not just in famous whaling seaports) to read the book aloud to each other. Nothing like this had happened since lovers of *Moby-Dick* shared it in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Already, this early in the twenty-first century, Melville's book (as the last section in this volume demonstrates) has taken on new roles in American culture and in art, in the United States and throughout the world. There has been an explosion in the number of men and women (and even schoolchildren) engaged with *Moby-Dick*. In this decade and a half the public has reclaimed *Moby-Dick*.

The 1967 Hayford-Parker NCE of *Moby-Dick* was pioneering, a scholarly textual edition in a classroom paperback that included a full list of variants between the English edition (*The Whale*, October 1851) and the American edition (*Moby-Dick*, November 1851). The NCE was cited in all serious scholarship and criticism for a generation. At the time of its publication almost nothing on Melville's biography had been discovered after 1951, when Jay Leyda published his two-volume chronological collection of documents, *The Melville Log*, and Leon Howard his narrative biography based on the *Log*. What had happened to the 1951 books was decisive, as I showed in *Melville Biography: An Inside Narrative* (2013). Charles Feidelson denounced *The Melville Log* as a "mere accumulation of data," a "welter of disconnected and often trivial data." Critics did not need to make an "appeal to fact," Feidelson declared, but to free themselves in rich speculative interpretation. Feidelson's version of the New Criticism triumphed, decade after decade. The *Log* was ignored, even when it was enlarged (with my help) in 1969. I had begun hunting contemporary reviews the old way, turning pages of bound volumes and turning microfilm reader knobs, but no wonder we had no new biographical studies to put into the first NCE.

In 2001 Melville biography had been transformed, starting in the 1980s, by strokes of luck, notably the salvaging of several hundred letters, a portion of the archive of Melville's sister Augusta, most of which was acquired by the New York Public Library in 1983. By the early 1990s I had transcribed these "Augusta Papers" into my working version of *The New Melville Log,* along with other small but important caches of family letters. Startling news came to light. We had known since 1960 that Melville completed a book in the spring of 1853, but in a letter to Augusta I found the title, *The Isle of the Cross*. I found a letter from a young newcomer to Lenox describing Melville and Hawthorne dining alone together in the Wilson Hotel—the previously unknown meeting when Melville presented Hawthorne with a copy of the book dedicated to him. Discoveries were reported in *Herman Melville: A Biography, 1819–1851* (1996) and the timing was such that I drew on the second volume, *Herman Melville: A Biography, 1851–1891* (2002) for the second NCE.

In this third NCE of *Moby-Dick* discoveries recently reported in my 2013 *Melville Biography: An Inside Narrative* are summarized, notably the painful story of the ruthlessness of the Harper brothers toward Melville just after the publication of *Moby-Dick*, outlined here in "Damned by Dollars." That story was written not from documents in a physical archive but from documents on the Internet, mainly from several newspaper databases. Other scholars making finds from digitized newspapers include George Monteiro, Richard E. Winslow III, Dennis Marnon, John Gretchko, Warren Broderick, Kevin Hayes, Greg Lennes, and Scott Norsworthy. The online riches are so lavish that everyone except Richard E. Winslow III, the researcher into small town newspapers, has to be reminded that many papers have not survived and that the majority have not yet been put online. The great boon is that newspaper editors were magpies, both before and after syndication, so that we know what Chester A. Arthur said about *Moby-Dick* because it was reprinted in Helena, Montana. Meantime, important research is being put online in *Melville's Marginalia* by Steven Olsen-Smith, Dennis Marnon, and Peter Norberg. The final volume of the fifteen-volume Northwestern-Newberry Edition of Melville,

the volume containing the unfinished writings, is complete with Robert Sandberg's heroic transcriptions of Melville's poetry, performed with the manuscripts at Harvard and with exceptionally clear images at his office in California. Research has been transformed since the second NCE and is open to anyone, anywhere in the world, even if some essential work on undigitized manuscripts still can be done only in libraries. It is no surprise that Norsworthy, Lennes, and I made discoveries in 2016 and 2017 that are reported here among the other dense documentation of Melville's life in relation to *Moby-Dick*.

Such dense documentation is needed, for the New Critical turn against archival scholarship has triumphed through generations of students and several schools of literary theory. Now one can look online at the recent Melville chapters in the annual *American Literary Scholarship* and see any number of articles on *Moby-Dick* that ignore biographical fact or treat it as "trivial data." During this three-quarters of a century rejection of biography, readers of Melville have never understood the full trajectory of his literary career. Critics cite his books: *Typee*, *Omoo*, *Mardi*, *Redburn*, *White-Jacket*, *Moby-Dick*, *Pierre*, *Israel Potter*, *The Piazza Tales*, *The Confidence-Man*, *Battle Pieces*, *Clarel*, and the late privately printed *John Marr* and *Timoleon*. Yet after *Pierre* and before "Bartleby the Scrivener" Melville tried to persuade Hawthorne to write up a story about an abandoned woman—then wrote it himself (December 1852–May 1853) as *The Isle of the Cross*, but was not able to publish it. This was a huge hunk of his working life, longer than it took him to write both *Redburn* and *White-Jacket* in 1849. In the late 1850s Melville wrote poetry for two or three years before he was ready to publish *Poems* in May 1860. This was a long period of mastering a new medium. When critics talk about how Melville moved smoothly from *Pierre* to "Bartleby" they ignore what he might have learned while writing *The Isle of the Cross*. When critics say Melville followed *The Confidence-Man* with *Battle Pieces* they truncate a long arc of his working life. In our recognition of Melville's literary triumphs we have not acknowledged what he might have learned by writing these lost books, how he might have grieved at not finding a publisher for them, and how that failure might have affected what he later wrote. We still look at Melville without acknowledging the full trajectory of his literary work.

Marianne Jankowski at Northwestern University Press designed a haunting cover for my *Melville Biography*: a book open on its spine, the bottom edges of the pages painted with Melville's image, but fanning open irregularly, so that his right eye down through his chin are almost completely visible while many leaves are stuck together, closed to view. This is the way we know Melville's life—some pages extraordinarily well documented (among them the week Melville met Hawthorne and wrote his essay on *Mosses from an Old Manse*), other leaves ready to open on one side only or firmly closed to view.

Melville was sure that the eternal whale would survive rising sea levels (another Flood, he said) and spout "frothed defiance" to the skies. Stubbornly if not defiantly, this third Norton Critical Edition brings to bear a rich accumulation of data to show what Melville knew about whaling from personal experience and what he read about whales and whaling; what praise and condemnation he experienced from critics before he began *Moby-Dick*; what his life was like during the writing of his masterpiece;

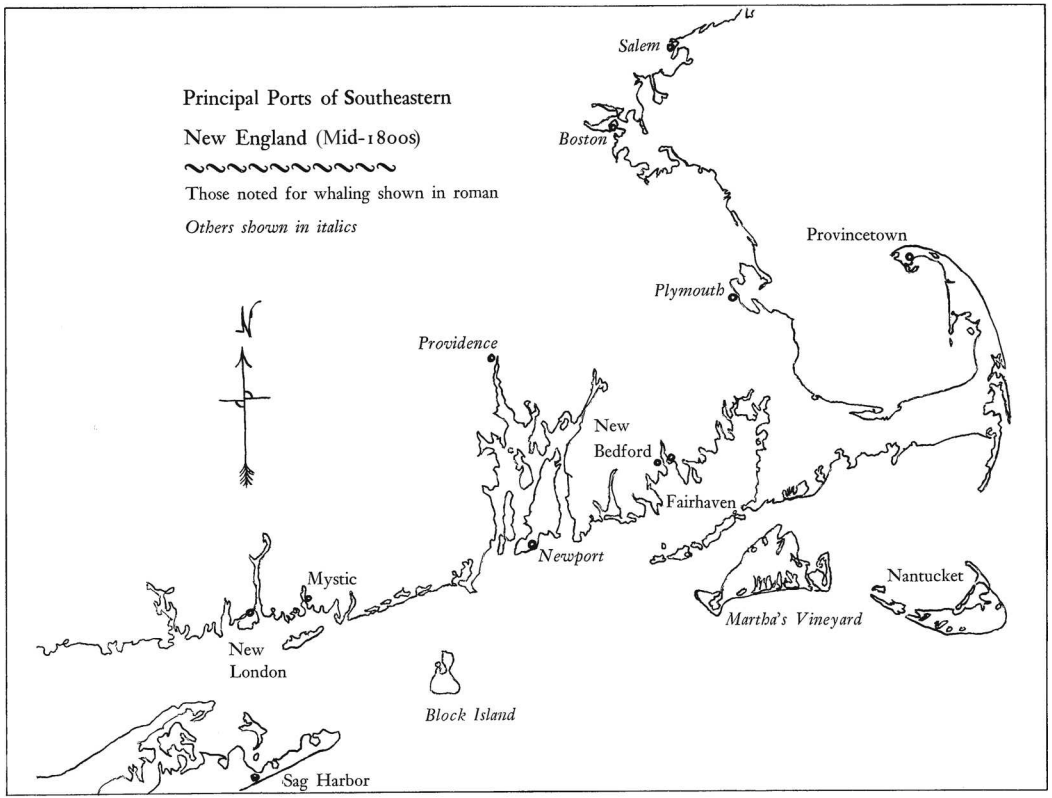
how bad luck of almost incredible proportions dogged him in its publication; how just after it was published he lost any value to the Harper brothers; how during his later obscurity *The Whale* and sometimes *Moby-Dick* were passed around in England, hand to hand, recommended to friends, until his fame soared after 1919, the centennial of his birth; and how a new nonacademic audience has arisen in the twenty-first century, one ready for data that can trigger its own creative responses. The treasure trove of facts in this volume frees the imagination to speculate reasonably about Melville's own creative processes and achievements. Some facts show just how high a personal price Melville paid for writing *Moby-Dick*. Still others reveal the heroism of readers willing to trust their own judgment in celebrating a book by an all-but-forgotten author. For anyone who wants to know Herman Melville and *Moby-Dick*, this third Norton Critical Edition is the fullest storehouse of riches.

However alluring a preface or a teacher's introduction can be, a reader can be intimidated by the prospect of beginning a big book everyone has heard about. Some stalwart readers of this Norton Critical Edition will start with the text of the book itself (here provided with helpful footnotes) and proceed systematically through the sections on the known facts of the backgrounds, the creation, and the reception of the book. Other readers might want to start in the "Aftermath" section with one Canadian professor and many British literary people who late in the 19th century recognized grandeur in the all-but-forgotten book and shared their enthusiasm with friends and strangers, passing the book hand to hand like a torch. By the early 1920s these admirers had alerted newspaper and magazine readers to the existence of a book that ought to have been recognized as a classic in 1851, when it was published. Not until after World War II did many cartoonists expect their viewers to recognize instantly Captain Ahab and the white whale, even if they had not read the book. Only in the 1950s did *Moby-Dick* become a text regularly taught in the classroom. Of all the academic writing that followed, we choose powerfully evocative and elegant pieces by two great late-twentieth century readers—Walter E. Bezanson and Harrison Hayford, professors whose passion equaled that of the early enthusiasts.

Evocation (rather than explication) continue in the 21st-century section. At last *Moby-Dick* has passed from the realm of the broad "reading public" and the classroom into the general culture. Appropriately, we begin with a passage by the rock critic Greil Marcus. What follows are pieces written for this edition by the novelist Jonathan Lethem and the marine biologist Roger Payne as well as exhilarating accounts of Melville in popular culture (Timothy Marr), the significance of the now-omnipresent *Moby-Dick* marathons (Mary K. Bercaw Edwards and Wyn Kelley), and the explosion of *Moby-Dick* into art at home and throughout the world (Robert K. Wallace). Appropriately, again, the cover picture is by Oleg Dobrovolski, a young artist who discovered the book in a Russian translation. For anyone who wants to know Herman Melville and *Moby-Dick*, this third Norton Critical Edition is the fullest storehouse of factual riches and, just as important, of incitements to the appreciative imagination.

Acknowledgments

The late John Benedict, editor at W. W. Norton, allowed Harrison Hayford and me to make the 1967 NCE of *Moby-Dick* a pioneering scholarly textual edition in a format friendly to students and common readers. Carol Bemis, the editor of the second edition (2001), also smoothed the way during work on this third edition. I thank her as well as Thea Goodrich and the daily resource person at Norton, Rachel Goodman. The artist Dorothy Cutter introduced me to the work of Oleg Dobrovolski, and Elena and David Stewart cooperated with Carol Bemis and others at Norton in gaining permission to feature this young Russian artist on the cover of this internationally minded edition. Lion G. Miles did still-valuable research in the Berkshires. I thank Ruth Degenhardt of the Berkshire Athenaeum. Frederick J. Kennedy and the late Joyce Deveau Kennedy did splendid research on Archibald MacMechan. I am grateful to Robert Sandberg, Scott Norsworthy, Robert D. Madison, Richard E. Winslow, Greg Lennes, Warren Broderick, Stephen Dennis, and the seven contributors to the final section, Greil Marcus, Timothy Marr, Wyn Kelley, Mary K. Bercaw Edwards, Robert K. Wallace, Jonathan Lethem, and Roger Payne. I particularly thank Heddy-Ann Richter for understanding how important this edition is to me.



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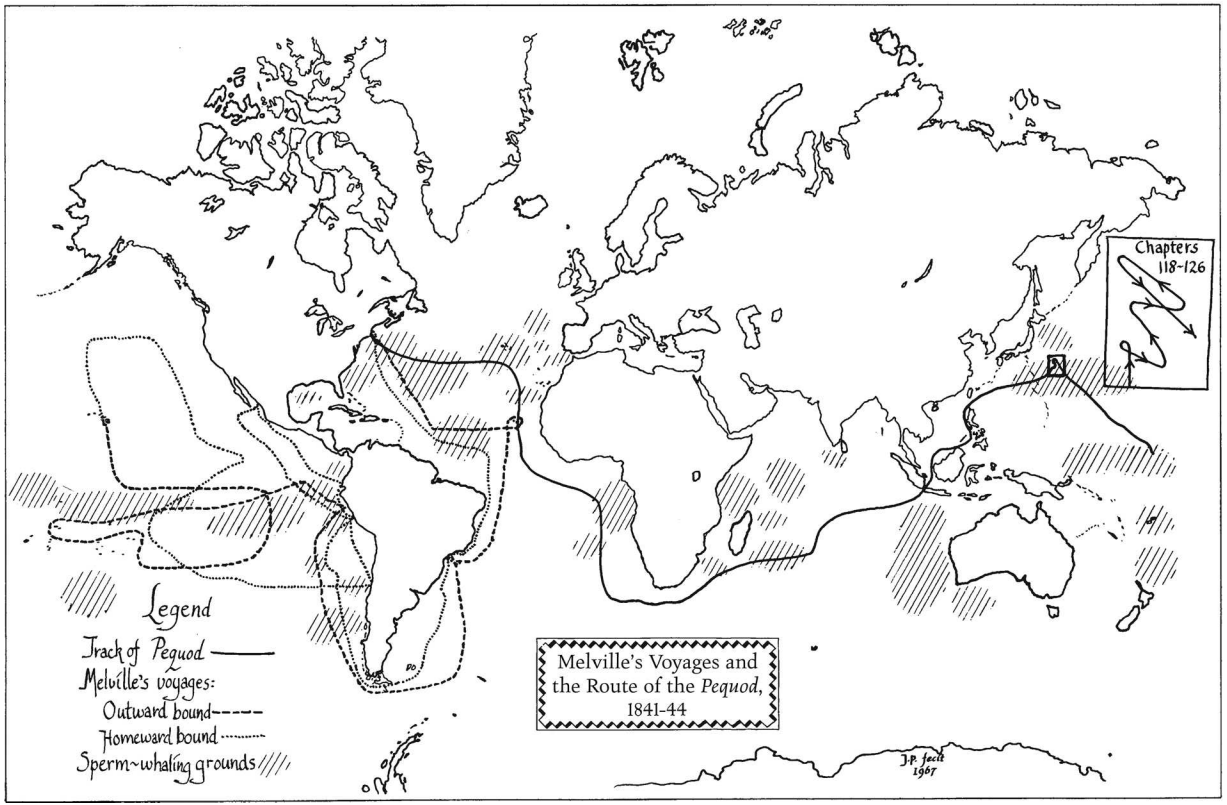

Drawn for the first edition of this volume by John B. Putnam.

The Text of MOBY-DICK; OR, THE WHALE.*

* Melville's original title, *The Whale*, was used for the English edition because his last-minute change to *Moby-Dick* reached London too late. The name of the White Whale is hyphenated in the title of the American edition, but in the text it is hyphenated only once, in Ch. 45, emended here so that the whale throughout is "Moby Dick" and the book is *Moby-Dick*. Melville had heard "wild legends in the Southern Sperm Whale Fisheries" (see p. 561) about a great white whale and knew the name "Mocha Dick" from the J. N. Reynolds article (1839), which he almost surely read (see pp. 501–03), but no source for "Moby" has been found.

IN TOKEN

OF MY ADMIRATION FOR HIS GENIUS

This Book is Inscribed

TO

NATHANIEL HAWTHORNE.

Contents of *Moby-Dick**

1 — Loomings	16
2 — The Carpet Bag	20
3 — The Spouter-Inn	23
4 — The Counterpane	34
5 — Breakfast	36
6 — The Street	38
7 — The Chapel	40
8 — The Pulpit	42
9 — The Sermon	44
10 — A Bosom Friend	50
11 — Nightgown	53
12 — Biographical	54
13 — Wheelbarrow	56
14 — Nantucket	59
15 — Chowder	61
16 — The Ship	63
17 — The Ramadan	74
18 — His Mark	78
19 — The Prophet	81
20 — All Astir	83
21 — Going Aboard	85
22 — Merry Christmas	87
23 — The Lee Shore	91
24 — The Advocate	91
25 — Postscript	95
26 — Knights and Squires	96
27 — Knights and Squires	98
28 — Ahab	102
29 — Enter Ahab; to him, Stubb	104
30 — The Pipe	106
31 — Queen Mab	107
32 — Cetology	108
33 — The Specksynder	118
34 — The Cabin Table	120
35 — The Mast-Head	124
36 — The Quarter-Deck. Ahab and all	130
37 — Sunset	135
38 — Dusk	136

* In the first American edition, as here, a few chapter titles in the Contents vary slightly from those used later at the chapter heads. “Praire” (Ch. 79) and “Heidelburgh” were acceptable spellings; see headnote on p. 411.

39 — First Night-Watch 137
40 — Forecastle.—Midnight 138
41 — Moby Dick 144
42 — The Whiteness of the Whale 151
43 — Hark! 157
44 — The Chart 158
45 — The Affidavit 162
46 — Surmises 168
47 — The Mat-Maker 170
48 — The First Lowering 172
49 — The Hyena 179
50 — Ahab's Boat and Crew—Fedallah 181
51 — The Spirit-Spout 183
52 — The Pequod meets the Albatross 185
53 — The Gam 187
54 — The Town Ho's Story 190
55 — Monstrous Pictures of Whales 205
56 — Less Erroneous Pictures of Whales 209
57 — Of Whales in Paint, in Teeth, &c. 211
58 — Brit 213
59 — Squid 215
60 — The Line 217
61 — Stubb kills a Whale 219
62 — The Dart 223
63 — The Crotch 224
64 — Stubb's Supper 225
65 — The Whale as a Dish 230
66 — The Shark Massacre 232
67 — Cutting In 233
68 — The Blanket 234
69 — The Funeral 236
70 — The Sphynx 237
71 — The Pequod meets the Jeroboam. Her Story 239
72 — The Monkey-rope 243
73 — Stubb & Flask kill a Right Whale 246
74 — The Sperm Whale's Head 250
75 — The Right Whale's Head 253
76 — The Battering Ram 255
77 — The Great Heidelburgh Tun 257
78 — Cistern and Buckets 258
79 — The Prairie 261
80 — The Nut 263
81 — The Pequod meets the Virgin 264
82 — The Honor and Glory of Whaling 272
83 — Jonah Historically Regarded 274
84 — Pitchpoling 276
85 — The Fountain 277
86 — The Tail 280
87 — The Grand Armada 284
88 — Schools & Schoolmasters 292
89 — Fast Fish and Loose Fish 294

90 — Heads or Tails 297
91 — The Pequod meets the Rose Bud 299
92 — Ambergris 303
93 — The Castaway 305
94 — A Squeeze of the Hand 308
95 — The Cassock 310
96 — The Try-Works 311
97 — The Lamp 314
98 — Stowing Down & Cleaning Up 315
99 — The Doubloon 317
100 — The Pequod meets the Samuel Enderby of London 321
101 — The Decanter 326
102 — A Bower in the Arsacides 329
103 — Measurement of the Whale's Skeleton 332
104 — The Fossil Whale 334
105 — Does the Whale Diminish? 336
106 — Ahab's Leg 339
107 — The Carpenter 341
108 — The Deck. Ahab and the Carpenter 343
109 — The Cabin. Ahab and Starbuck 346
110 — Queequeg in his Coffin 348
111 — The Pacific 352
112 — The Blacksmith 353
113 — The Forge 354
114 — The Gilder 357
115 — The Pequod meets the Bachelor 358
116 — The Dying Whale 360
117 — The Whale-Watch 361
118 — The Quadrant 362
119 — The Candles 363
120 — The Deck 368
121 — Midnight, on the Forecastle 368
122 — Midnight, Aloft 370
123 — The Musket 370
124 — The Needle 372
125 — The Log and Line 374
126 — The Life-Buoy 376
127 — Ahab and the Carpenter 379
128 — The Pequod meets the Rachel 380
129 — The Cabin. Ahab and Pip 383
130 — The Hat 384
131 — The Pequod meets the Delight 387
132 — The Symphony 388
133 — The Chase. First Day 390
134 — The Chase. Second Day 397
135 — The Chase. Third Day 402
Epilogue 410

ETYMOLOGY.

(SUPPLIED BY A LATE CONSUMPTIVE USHER TO A GRAMMAR SCHOOL.)

The pale Usher[1]—threadbare in coat, heart, body, and brain; I see him now. He was ever dusting his old lexicons and grammars, with a queer handkerchief, mockingly embellished with all the gay flags of all the known nations of the world. He loved to dust his old grammars; it somehow mildly reminded him of his mortality.

"While you take in hand to school others, and to teach them by what name a whale-fish is to be called in our tongue, leaving out, through ignorance, the letter H, which almost alone maketh up the signification of the word, you deliver that which is not true."

Hackluyt.

"WHALE. * * * Sw. and Dan. *hval*. This animal is named from roundness or rolling; for in Dan. *hvalt* is arched or vaulted."

Webster's Dictionary.

"WHALE. * * * It is more immediately from the Dut. and Ger. *Wallen*; A.S. *Walw-ian*, to roll, to wallow."

Richardson's Dictionary.

הדג,	*Hebrew.*
χητος,	*Greek.*
CETUS,	*Latin.*
WHŒL,	*Anglo-Saxon.*
HVALT,	*Danish.*
WAL,	*Dutch.*
HWAL,	*Swedish.*
WHALE,	*Icelandic.*
WHALE,	*English.*
BALEINE,	*French.*
BALLENA,	*Spanish.*
PEKEE-NUEE-NUEE,	*Fegee.*
PEHEE-NUEE-NUEE,	*Erromangoan.*

1. Assistant schoolmaster.

EXTRACTS.[1]

(SUPPLIED BY A SUB-SUB-LIBRARIAN.)

[It will be seen that this mere painstaking burrower and grub-worm of a poor devil of a Sub-Sub appears to have gone through the long Vaticans[2] and street-stalls of the earth, picking up whatever random allusions to whales he could anyways find in any book whatsoever, sacred or profane. Therefore you must not, in every case at least, take the higgledy-piggledy whale statements, however authentic, in these extracts, for veritable gospel cetology. Far from it. As touching the ancient authors generally, as well as the poets here appearing, these extracts are solely valuable or entertaining, as affording a glancing bird's eye view of what has been promiscuously said, thought, fancied, and sung of Leviathan, by many nations and generations, including our own.

So fare thee well, poor devil of a Sub-Sub, whose commentator I am. Thou belongest to that hopeless, sallow tribe which no wine of this world will ever warm; and for whom even Pale Sherry would be too rosy-strong; but with whom one sometimes loves to sit, and feel poor-devilish, too; and grow convivial upon tears; and say to them bluntly, with full eyes and empty glasses, and in not altogether unpleasant sadness—Give it up, Sub-Subs! For by how much the more pains ye take to please the world, by so much the more shall ye for ever go thankless! Would that I could clear out Hampton Court and the Tuileries[3] for ye! But gulp down your tears and hie aloft to the royal-mast with your hearts; for your friends who have gone before are clearing out the seven-storied heavens, and making refugees of long-pampered Gabriel, Michael, and Raphael,[4] against your coming. Here ye strike but splintered hearts together—there, ye shall strike unsplinterable glasses!]

"And God created great whales."
Genesis.

"Leviathan maketh a path to shine after him;
One would think the deep to be hoary."
Job.

"Now the Lord had prepared a great fish to swallow up Jonah."
Jonah.

"There go the ships; there is that Leviathan whom thou hast made to play therein." *Psalms.*

1. Melville's handwriting was so difficult to read that even his sisters, who copied out clean drafts, could not always get the words right. A quick way of seeing how words could go wrong is to look at the Emendations in these "Extracts," at points where Melville was plainly trying to copy exactly. Melville's sources for all these etymologies, his quotations, and his rephrasing of sources are elaborately discussed in *The Writings of Herman Melville*, Vol. 6: *Moby-Dick* (1988), pp. 813–30 (see the Bibliography). The Latin in the quotation from Sir Thomas Browne on p. 9 is glossed here ("I do not know what it is") so the extracts can be left without distraction to give the reader what Melville intended, an uninterrupted "glancing bird's eye view" of whales and whalers "by many nations and generations."
2. Great libraries.
3. Royal houses in London and Paris, respectively.
4. Archangels.

"In that day, the Lord with his sore, and great, and strong sword, shall punish Leviathan the piercing serpent, even Leviathan that crooked serpent; and he shall slay the dragon that is in the sea."

Isaiah.

"And what thing soever besides cometh within the chaos of this monster's mouth, be it beast, boat, or stone, down it goes all incontinently that foul great swallow of his, and perisheth in the bottomless gulf of his paunch."

Holland's Plutarch's Morals.

"The Indian Sea breedeth the most and the biggest fishes that are: among which the Whales and Whirlpooles called Balæne, take up as much in length as four acres or arpens of land."

Holland's Pliny.

"Scarcely had we proceeded two days on the sea, when about sunrise a great many Whales and other monsters of the sea, appeared. Among the former, one was of a most monstrous size. * * This came towards us, open-mouthed, raising the waves on all sides, and beating the sea before him into a foam."

Tooke's Lucian.
"The True History."

"He visited this country also with a view of catching horse-whales, which had bones of very great value for their teeth, of which he brought some to the king. * * * The best whales were catched in his own country, of which some were forty-eight, some fifty yards long. He said that he was one of six who had killed sixty in two days."

Other or Octher's verbal narrative taken down from his mouth by King Alfred. A. D. 890.

"And whereas all the other things, whether beast or vessel, that enter into the dreadful gulf of this monster's (whale's) mouth, are immediately lost and swallowed up, the sea-gudgeon retires into it in great security, and there sleeps."

MONTAIGNE.—Apology for Raimond Sebond.

"Let us fly, let us fly! Old Nick take me if it is not Leviathan described by the noble prophet Moses in the life of patient Job."

Rabelais.

"This whale's liver was two cart-loads."

Stowe's Annals.

"The great Leviathan that maketh the seas to seethe like a boiling pan." *Lord Bacon's Version of the Psalms.*

"Touching that monstrous bulk of the whale or ork we have received nothing certain. They grow exceeding fat, insomuch that an incredible quantity of oil will be extracted out of one whale."

Ibid "History of Life and Death."

"The sovereignest thing on earth is parmacetti for an inward bruise."

King Henry.

"Very like a whale." *Hamlet.*

"Which to recure, no skill of leach's art
Mote him availle, but to returne againe
To his wound's worker, that with lovely dart,
Dinting his breast, had bred his restless paine,
Like as the wounded whale to shore flies from the
maine." *The Fairie Queen.*

"Immense as whales, the motion of whose vast bodies can in a peaceful calm trouble the ocean till it boil."
Sir William Davenant. Preface to Gondibert.

"What spermacetti is, men might justly doubt, since the learned Hofmannus in his work of thirty years, saith plainly, *Nescio quid sit*."
Sir T. Browne. Of Sperma Ceti and the Sperma Ceti Whale. Vide his V. E.

"Like Spencer's Talus with his iron flail
He threatens ruin with his ponderous tail.
* * * * *
Their fixed jav'lins in his side he wears,
And on his back a grove of pikes appears."
Waller's Battle of the Summer Islands.

"By art is created that great Leviathan, called a Commonwealth or State—(in Latin, Civitas) which is but an artificial man."
Opening sentence of Hobbes's Leviathan.

"Silly Mansoul swallowed it without chewing, as if it had been a sprat in the mouth of a whale." *Holy War.*

"That sea beast
Leviathan, which God of all his works
Created hugest that swim the ocean stream."
Paradise Lost.

——"There Leviathan,
Hugest of living creatures, on the deep
Stretched like a promontory sleeps or swims,
And seems a moving land; and at his gills
Draws in, and at his trunk spouts out a sea."
Ibid.

"The mighty whales which swim in a sea of water, and have a sea of oil swimming in them."
Fuller's Profane and Holy State.

"So close behind some promontory lie
The huge Leviathans to attend their prey,
And give no chace but swallow in the fry,
Which through their gaping jaws mistake the way."
Dryden's Annus Mirabilis.

"While the whale is floating at the stern of the ship, they cut off his head, and tow it with a boat as near the shore as it will come; but it will be aground in twelve or thirteen foot water."

Thomas Edge's Ten Voyages to Spitzbergen, in Purchass.

"In their way they saw many whales sporting in the ocean, and in wantonness fuzzing up the water through their pipes and vents, which nature has placed on their shoulders."

Sir T. Herbert's Voyages into Asia and Africa.

Harris Coll.

"Here they saw such huge troops of whales, that they were forced to proceed with a great deal of caution for fear they should run their ship upon them."

Schouten's Sixth Circumnavigation.

"We set sail from the Elbe, wind N. E. in the ship called The Jonas-in-the-Whale. * * *

Some say the whale can't open his mouth, but that is a fable. * * *

They frequently climb up the masts to see whether they can see a whale, for the first discoverer has a ducat for his pains. * * *

I was told of a whale taken near Shetland, that had above a barrel of herrings in his belly. * * *

One of our harpooneers told me that he caught once a whale in Spitzbergen that was white all over."

A Voyage to Greenland, A.D. 1671.

Harris Coll.

"Several whales have come in upon this coast (Fife). Anno 1652, one eighty foot in length of the whale-bone kind came in, which, (as I was informed) beside a vast quantity of oil, did afford 500 weight of baleen. The jaws of it stand for a gate in the garden of Pitfirren."

Sibbald's Fife and Kinross.

"Myself have agreed to try whether I can master and kill this Spermaceti whale, for I could never hear of any of that sort that was killed by any man, such is his fierceness and swiftness."

Richard Stafford's Letter from the Bermudas.

Phil. Trans. A. D. 1668.

"Whales in the sea
God's voice obey."

N. E. Primer.

"We saw also abundance of large whales, there being more in these southern seas, as I may say, by a hundred to one; than we have to the northward of us." *Captain Cowley's Voyage round the Globe. A. D.* 1729.

* * * * * "and the breath of the whale is frequently attended with such an insupportable smell, as to bring on a disorder of the brain."

Ulloa's South America.

"To fifty chosen sylphs of special note,
We trust the important charge, the petticoat,
Oft have we known that seven-fold fence to fail,
Tho' stiff with hoops and armed with ribs of whale."

Rape of the Lock.

"If we compare land animals in respect to magnitude, with those that take up their abode in the deep, we shall find they will appear contemptible in the comparison. The whale is doubtless the largest animal in creation."

Goldsmith's Nat. Hist.

"If you should write a fable for little fishes, you would make them speak like great whales."

Goldsmith to Johnson.

"In the afternoon we saw what was supposed to be a rock, but it was found to be a dead whale, which some Asiatics had killed, and were then towing ashore. They seemed to endeavor to conceal themselves behind the whale, in order to avoid being seen by us."

Cook's Voyages.

"The larger whales, they seldom venture to attack. They stand in so great dread of some of them, that when out at sea they are afraid to mention even their names, and carry dung, brim-stone, juniper-wood, and some other articles of the same nature in their boats, in order to terrify and prevent their too near approach."

Uno Von Troil's Letters on Banks's and Solander's Voyage to Iceland in 1772.

"The Spermacetti Whale found by the Nantuckois, is an active, fierce animal, and requires vast address and boldness in the fishermen."

Thomas Jefferson's Whale Memorial to the French minister in 1788.

"And pray, sir, what in the world is equal to it?"

Edmund Burke's reference in Parliament to the Nantucket Whale-Fishery.

"Spain——a great whale stranded on the shores of Europe."

Edmund Burke. (somewhere.)

"A tenth branch of the king's ordinary revenue, said to be grounded on the consideration of his guarding and protecting the seas from pirates and robbers, is the right to *royal* fish, which are whale and sturgeon. And these, when either thrown ashore or caught near the coasts, are the property of the king."

Blackstone.

"Soon to the sport of death the crews repair:
Rodmond unerring o'er his head suspends
The barbed steel, and every turn attends."

Falconer's Shipwreck.

"Bright shone the roofs, the domes, the spires,
And rockets flew self driven,
To hang their momentary fires
Amid the vault of heaven.

"So fire with water to compare,
The ocean serves on high,
Up-spouted by a whale in air,
To express unwieldy joy."

Cowper, on the Queen's Visit to London.

"Ten or fifteen gallons of blood are thrown out of the heart at a stroke, with immense velocity."

John Hunter's account of the dissection of a whale. (A small sized one.)

"The aorta of a whale is larger in the bore than the main pipe of the water-works at London Bridge, and the water roaring in its passage through that pipe is inferior in impetus and velocity to the blood gushing from the whale's heart."

Paley's Theology.

"The whale is a mammiferous animal without hind feet."

Baron Cuvier.

"In 40 degrees south, we saw Spermacetti Whales, but did not take any till the first of May, the sea being then covered with them."

Colnett's Voyage for the Purpose of Extending the Spermacetti Whale Fishery.

"In the free element beneath me swam,
Floundered and dived, in play, in chace, in battle,
Fishes of every color, form, and kind;
Which language cannot paint, and mariner
Had never seen; from dread Leviathan
To insect millions peopling every wave:
Gather'd in shoals immense, like floating islands,
Led by mysterious instinct through that waste
And trackless region, though on every side
Assaulted by voracious enemies,
Whales, sharks, and monsters, arm'd in front or jaw,
With swords, saws, spiral horns, or hooked fangs."

Montgomery's World before the Flood.

"Io! Pæan! Io! sing,
To the finny people's king.
Not a mightier whale than this
In the vast Atlantic is;
Not a fatter fish than he,
Flounders round the Polar Sea."

Charles Lamb's Triumph of the Whale.

"In the year 1690 some persons were on a high hill observing the whales spouting and sporting with each other, when one observed; there—pointing to the sea—is a green pasture where our children's grand-children will go for bread."

Obed Macy's History of Nantucket.

"I built a cottage for Susan and myself and made a gateway in the form of a Gothic Arch, by setting up a whale's jaw bones."

Hawthorne's Twice Told Tales.

"She came to bespeak a monument for her first love, who had been killed by a whale in the Pacific ocean, no less than forty years ago."

Ibid.

"No, Sir, 'tis a Right Whale," answered Tom; "I saw his spout; he threw up a pair of as pretty rainbows as a Christian would wish to look at. He's a raal oil-butt, that fellow!"

Cooper's Pilot.

"The papers were brought in, and we saw in the Berlin Gazette that whales had been introduced on the stage there."

Eckermann's Conversations with Goethe.

"My God! Mr. Chase, what is the matter?" I answered, "we have been stove by a whale."

"Narrative of the Shipwreck of the Whale Ship Essex of Nantucket, which was attacked and finally destroyed by a large Sperm Whale in the Pacific Ocean." By Owen Chase of Nantucket, first mate of said vessel. New York. 1821.

"A mariner sat on the shrouds one night,
The wind was piping free;
Now bright, now dimmed, was the moonlight pale,
And the phospher gleamed in the wake of the whale,
As it floundered in the sea."

Elizabeth Oakes Smith.

"The quantity of line withdrawn from the different boats engaged in the capture of this one whale, amounted altogether to 10,440 yards or nearly six English miles." * * *

"Sometimes the whale shakes its tremendous tail in the air, which, cracking like a whip, resounds to the distance of three or four miles."

Scoresby.

"Mad with the agonies he endures from these fresh attacks, the infuriated Sperm Whale rolls over and over; he rears his enormous head, and with wide expanded jaw snaps at everything around him; he rushes at the boats with his head; they are propelled before him with vast swiftness, and sometimes utterly destroyed.

* * * It is a matter of great astonishment that the consideration of the habits of so interesting, and, in a commercial point of view, of so important an animal (as the Sperm Whale) should have been so entirely neglected, or should have excited so little curiosity among the numerous, and many of them competent observers, that of late years must have possessed the most abundant and the most convenient opportunities of witnessing their habitudes."

Thomas Beale's History of the Sperm Whale, 1839.

"The Cachalot" (Sperm Whale) "is not only better armed than the True Whale" (Greenland or Right Whale) "in possessing a formidable weapon at either extremity of its body, but also more frequently displays a disposition to employ those weapons offensively, and in a manner at once so artful, bold, and mischievous, as to lead to its being regarded as the most dangerous to attack of all the known species of the whale tribe."

Frederick Debell Bennett's Whaling Voyage Round the Globe. 1840.

October 13. "There she blows," was sung out from the mast-head.

"Where away?" demanded the captain.

"Three points off the lee bow, sir."

"Raise up your wheel. Steady!"

"Steady, sir."

"Mast-head ahoy! Do you see that whale now?"

"Ay ay, sir! A shoal of Sperm Whales! There she blows! There she breaches!"

"Sing out! sing out every time!"

"Ay ay, sir! There she blows! there—there—*thar* she blows—bowes—bo-o-o-s!"

"How far off?"

"Two miles and a half."

"Thunder and lightning! so near! Call all hands!"

J. Ross Browne's Etchings of a Whaling Cruise. 1846.

"The Whale-ship Globe, on board of which vessel occurred the horrid transactions we are about to relate, belonged to the island of Nantucket."

"Narrative of the Globe Mutiny," by Lay and Hussey, survivors. A. D. 1828.

"Being once pursued by a whale which he had wounded, he parried the assault for some time with a lance; but the furious monster at length rushed on the boat; himself and comrades only being preserved by leaping into the water when they saw the onset was inevitable."

Missionary Journal of Tyerman and Bennett.

"Nantucket itself," said Mr. Webster, "is a very striking and peculiar portion of the National interest. There is a population of eight or nine thousand persons, living here in the sea, adding largely every year to the National wealth by the boldest and most persevering industry."

Report of Daniel Webster's Speech in the U. S. Senate, on the application for the Erection of a Breakwater at Nantucket. 1828.

"The whale fell directly over him, and probably killed him in a moment."

"The Whale and his Captors, or The Whaleman's Adventures and the Whale's Biography, as gathered on the Homeward Cruise of the Commodore Preble." By Rev. Henry T. Cheever.

"If you make the least damn bit of noise," replied Samuel, "I will send you to hell."

Life of Samuel Comstock (the mutineer), by his brother, William Comstock. Another Version of the whale-ship Globe narrative.

"The voyages of the Dutch and English to the Northern Ocean, in order, if possible, to discover a passage through it to India, though they failed of their main object, laid open the haunts of the whale."

McCulloch's Commercial Dictionary.

"These things are reciprocal; the ball rebounds, only to bound forward again; for now in laying open the haunts of the whale, the whalemen seem to have indirectly hit upon new clews to that same mystic North-West Passage."

From "Something" unpublished.

"It is impossible to meet a whale-ship on the ocean without being struck by her mere appearance. The vessel under short sail, with look-outs at the mast-heads, eagerly scanning the wide expanse around them, has a totally different air from those engaged in a regular voyage."

Currents and Whaling. U. S. Ex. Ex.

"Pedestrians in the vicinity of London and elsewhere may recollect having seen large curved bones set upright in the earth, either to form arches over gateways, or entrances to alcoves, and they may perhaps have been told that these were the ribs of whales."

Tales of a Whale Voyager to the Arctic Ocean.

"It was not till the boats returned from the pursuit of these whales, that the whites saw their ship in bloody possession of the savages enrolled among the crew."

Newspaper Account of the Taking and Retaking of the Whale-ship Hobomack.

"It is generally well known that out of the crews of Whaling vessels (American) few ever return in the ships on board of which they departed."

Cruise in a Whale Boat.

"Suddenly a mighty mass emerged from the water, and shot up perpendicularly into the air. It was the whale."

Miriam Coffin or the Whale Fisherman.

"The Whale is harpooned to be sure; but bethink you, how you would manage a powerful unbroken colt, with the mere appliance of a rope tied to the root of his tail."

A Chapter on Whaling in Ribs and Trucks.

"On one occasion I saw two of these monsters (whales) probably male and female, slowly swimming, one after the other, within less than a stone's throw of the shore" (Terra Del Fuego), "over which the beech tree extended its branches."

Darwin's Voyage of a Naturalist.

"'Stern all!' exclaimed the mate, as upon turning his head, he saw the distended jaws of a large Sperm Whale close to the head of the boat, threatening it with instant destruction;—'Stern all, for your lives!'"

Wharton the Whale Killer.

"So be cheery, my lads, let your hearts never fail,
While the bold harpooneer is striking the whale!"

Nantucket Song.

"Oh, the rare old Whale, mid storm and gale
In his ocean home will be
A giant in might, where might is right,
And King of the boundless sea."

Whale Song.

CHAPTER 1

LOOMINGS[1]

Call me Ishmael.[2] Some years ago—never mind how long precisely—having little or no money in my purse, and nothing particular to interest me on shore, I thought I would sail about a little and see the watery part of the world. It is a way I have of driving off the spleen,[3] and regulating the circulation. Whenever I find myself growing grim about the mouth; whenever it is a damp, drizzly November in my soul; whenever I find myself involuntarily pausing before coffin warehouses, and bringing up the rear of every funeral I meet; and especially whenever my hypos[4] get such an upper hand of me, that it requires a strong moral principle to prevent me from deliberately stepping into the street, and methodically knocking people's hats off—then, I account it high time to get to sea as soon as I can. This is my substitute for pistol and ball. With a philosophical flourish Cato[5] throws himself upon his sword; I quietly take to the ship. There is nothing surprising in this. If they but knew it, almost all men in their degree, some time or other, cherish very nearly the same feelings towards the ocean with me.

There now is your insular city of the Manhattoes,[6] belted round by wharves as Indian isles[7] by coral reefs—commerce surrounds it with her surf. Right and left, the streets take you waterward. Its extreme down-town is the Battery,[8] where that noble mole is washed by waves, and cooled by breezes, which a few hours previous were out of sight of land. Look at the crowds of water-gazers there.

Circumambulate the city of a dreamy Sabbath afternoon. Go from Corlears Hook to Coenties Slip, and from thence, by Whitehall, northward. What do you see?[9]—Posted like silent sentinels all around the town, stand thousands upon thousands of mortal men fixed in ocean reveries. Some leaning against the spiles;[1] some seated upon the pier-heads; some looking over the bulwarks of ships from China; some high aloft in the rigging, as

1. Dimly seen land or ships ahead or even beyond the horizon.
2. The name of the first-person narrator implies that he is an outcast from a great family. In the Bible, Ishmael is the oldest son of the patriarch Abraham, by the Egyptian Hagar, servant to Abraham's then-barren wife, Sarah; Sarah mistreats Hagar, who flees into the desert, where an angel feeds her and reveals that she is pregnant with Ishmael, who will be "a wild man," whose "hand will be against every man, and every man's hand against him" (Genesis 16.12). Years later, after Sarah bears Isaac, she prevails upon Abraham to send Hagar and Ishmael away; in the wilderness, an angel again protects them. Traditionally Ishmael is identified as the ancestor of the Arabs, whereas his younger half-brother Isaac is the ancestor of the Jews; on the point of shared ancestry, DNA analysis establishes the accuracy of the Bible and Muslim traditions. Unless otherwise indicated, all biblical references in these notes refer to the KJV.
3. Violent feelings and displays of irritation or anger, formerly attributed to that organ.
4. Short for "hypochondrias," a state of depression somewhat more chronic and morbid than our "blues."
5. The suicide of this Roman statesman-soldier (95–46 B.C.E.), after his defeat in battle, exemplified his Stoic philosophy. Stoicism is the belief that people should uncomplainingly accept all events as the unavoidable results of divine will.
6. Inhabitants of Manhattan Island, as in Washington Irving's *Knickerbocker History of New York* (1809).
7. I.e., islands in the East Indies.
8. At the southern tip of Manhattan, formerly the site of a fort.
9. The reader is directed to start at Corlears Hook, on the East River below Grand Street, and walk to Coenties Slip, almost to the Battery, then follow Whitehall northwest (across Pearl Street, where Melville was born) on its slanting course to Broadway. In Melville's time, Whitehall was in sight of the wharves, and from Broadway any street to the left (with the walker's back turned to the Battery) led to the Hudson River and more wharves.

1. Large support posts.

if striving to get a still better seaward peep. But these are all landsmen; of week days pent up in lath and plaster—tied to counters, nailed to benches, clinched to desks. How then is this? Are the green fields gone? What do they here?

But look! here come more crowds, pacing straight for the water, and seemingly bound for a dive. Strange! Nothing will content them but the extremest limit of the land; loitering under the shady lee of yonder warehouses will not suffice. No. They must get just as nigh the water as they possibly can without falling in. And there they stand—miles of them—leagues. Inlanders all, they come from lanes and alleys, streets and avenues—north, east, south, and west. Yet here they all unite. Tell me, does the magnetic virtue in the needles of the compasses of all those ships attract them thither?[2]

Once more. Say, you are in the country; in some high land of lakes. Take almost any path you please, and ten to one it carries you down in a dale, and leaves you there by a pool in the stream. There is magic in it. Let the most absent-minded of men be plunged in his deepest reveries—stand that man on his legs, set his feet a-going, and he will infallibly lead you to water, if water there be in all that region. Should you ever be athirst in the great American desert, try this experiment, if your caravan happen to be supplied with a metaphysical professor. Yes, as every one knows, meditation and water are wedded for ever.

But here is an artist. He desires to paint you the dreamiest, shadiest, quietest, most enchanting bit of romantic landscape in all the valley of the Saco.[3] What is the chief element he employs? There stand his trees, each with a hollow trunk, as if a hermit and a crucifix were within; and here sleeps his meadow, and there sleep his cattle; and up from yonder cottage goes a sleepy smoke. Deep into distant woodlands winds a mazy way, reaching to overlapping spurs of mountains bathed in their hill-side blue. But though the picture lies thus tranced, and though this pine-tree shakes down its sighs like leaves upon this shepherd's head, yet all were vain, unless the shepherd's eye were fixed upon the magic stream before him. Go visit the Prairies[4] in June, when for scores on scores of miles you wade knee-deep among Tiger-lilies—what is the one charm wanting?—Water—there is not a drop of water there! Were Niagara but a cataract of sand, would you travel your thousand miles to see it? Why did the poor poet of Tennessee,[5] upon suddenly receiving two handfuls of silver, deliberate whether to buy him a coat, which he sadly needed, or invest his money in a pedestrian trip to Rockaway Beach?[6] Why is almost every robust healthy boy with a robust healthy soul in him, at some time or other crazy to go to sea? Why upon your first voyage as a passenger, did you yourself feel such a mystical vibration, when first told that you and your ship were now out of sight of land? Why did the old Persians hold the sea holy? Why did the

2. Melville may have known the pamphleteer William Cobbett's *Life and Adventures of Peter Porcupine* (1796): "From the top of Portsdown, I, for the first time, beheld the sea, and no sooner did I behold it than I wished to be a sailor. I could never account for this sudden impulse, nor can I now. Almost all English boys feel the same inclination: it would seem that, like young ducks, instinct leads them to rush on the bosom of the water."
3. During his honeymoon, in 1847, Melville had visited this picturesque valley in southern New Hampshire.
4. Melville had visited then-frontier Illinois in early July 1840.
5. Unidentified, and presumably invented on the spot rather than referring to a real poet.
6. A popular beach on the southern coast of Long Island.

Greeks give it a separate deity,[7] and make him the own brother of Jove? Surely all this is not without meaning. And still deeper the meaning of that story of Narcissus,[8] who because he could not grasp the tormenting, mild image he saw in the fountain, plunged into it and was drowned. But that same image, we ourselves see in all rivers and oceans. It is the image of the ungraspable phantom of life; and this is the key to it all.

Now, when I say that I am in the habit of going to sea whenever I begin to grow hazy about the eyes, and begin to be over conscious of my lungs, I do not mean to have it inferred that I ever go to sea as a passenger. For to go as a passenger you must needs have a purse, and a purse is but a rag unless you have something in it. Besides, passengers get sea-sick—grow quarrelsome—don't sleep of nights—do not enjoy themselves much, as a general thing;—no, I never go as a passenger; nor, though I am something of a salt,[9] do I ever go to sea as a Commodore, or a Captain, or a Cook. I abandon the glory and distinction of such offices to those who like them. For my part, I abominate all honorable respectable toils, trials, and tribulations of every kind whatsoever. It is quite as much as I can do to take care of myself, without taking care of ships, barques, brigs, schooners, and what not.[1] And as for going as cook,—though I confess there is considerable glory in that, a cook being a sort of officer on ship-board—yet, somehow, I never fancied broiling fowls;—though once broiled, judiciously buttered, and judgmatically salted and peppered, there is no one who will speak more respectfully, not to say reverentially, of a broiled fowl than I will. It is out of the idolatrous dotings of the old Egyptians upon broiled ibis and roasted river horse,[2] that you see the mummies of those creatures in their huge bake-houses the pyramids.

No, when I go to sea, I go as a simple sailor, right before the mast, plumb down into the forecastle, aloft there to the royal mast-head.[3] True, they rather order me about some, and make me jump from spar to spar, like a grasshopper in a May meadow. And at first, this sort of thing is unpleasant enough. It touches one's sense of honor, particularly if you come of an old established family in the land, the Van Rensselaers, or Randolphs, or Hardicanutes.[4] And more than all, if just previous to putting your hand into the tar-pot, you have been lording it as a country schoolmaster, making the tallest boys stand in awe of you.[5] The transition is a keen one, I assure you, from a schoolmaster to a sailor, and requires a strong decoction of Seneca and the Stoics[6] to enable you to grin and bear it. But even this wears off in time.

7. I.e., Poseidon, in Greek mythology (Neptune, in Roman mythology).
8. In Book 3 of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, he falls in love with his own reflection in water (but does not plunge into the water and drown).
9. Experienced seaman.
1. The largest vessels were steamers, followed, in descending order of size, by ships, barques, brigs, schooners, sloops, and barges.
2. Hippopotamus.
3. Top of the highest mast.
4. Eleventh-century Danish rulers of England. Melville's mother was a descendant of the Van Rensselaers, the dominant Dutch family in colonial New York and the early republic. The Randolphs included many eminent Virginians (among them Thomas Jefferson).
5. Melville had taught in a country school near Pittsfield, Massachusetts, in 1837–38 before sailing to Liverpool as a green (inexperienced) hand in 1839, and did so again in at least three such schools near Albany, the last shortly before sailing on the whaleship *Acushnet* the first week of 1841.
6. Lucius Annaeus Seneca (ca. 4 B.C.E.–65 C.E.), Roman adherent of Stoicism.

What of it, if some old hunks[7] of a sea-captain orders me to get a broom and sweep down the decks? What does that indignity amount to, weighed, I mean, in the scales of the New Testament? Do you think the archangel Gabriel thinks anything the less of me, because I promptly and respectfully obey that old hunks in that particular instance? Who aint a slave?[8] Tell me that. Well, then, however the old sea-captains may order me about—however they may thump and punch me about, I have the satisfaction of knowing that it is all right; that everybody else is one way or other served in much the same way—either in a physical or metaphysical point of view, that is; and so the universal thump is passed round, and all hands should rub each other's shoulder-blades, and be content.

Again, I always go to sea as a sailor, because they make a point of paying me for my trouble, whereas they never pay passengers a single penny that I ever heard of. On the contrary, passengers themselves must pay. And there is all the difference in the world between paying and being paid. The act of paying is perhaps the most uncomfortable infliction that the two orchard thieves[9] entailed upon us. But *being paid*,—what will compare with it? The urbane activity with which a man receives money is really marvellous, considering that we so earnestly believe money to be the root of all earthly ills, and that on no account can a monied man enter heaven.[1] Ah! how cheerfully we consign ourselves to perdition!

Finally, I always go to sea as a sailor, because of the wholesome exercise and pure air of the forecastle deck. For as in this world, head winds are far more prevalent than winds from astern (that is, if you never violate the Pythagorean maxim), so for the most part the Commodore on the quarter-deck gets his atmosphere at second hand from the sailors on the forecastle.[2] He thinks he breathes it first; but not so. In much the same way do the commonalty lead their leaders in many other things, at the same time that the leaders little suspect it. But wherefore it was that after having repeatedly smelt the sea as a merchant sailor, I should now take it into my head to go on a whaling voyage; this the invisible police officer of the Fates,[3] who has the constant surveillance of me, and secretly dogs me, and influences me in some unaccountable way—he can better answer than any one else. And, doubtless, my going on this whaling voyage, formed part of the grand programme of Providence that was drawn up a long time ago. It came in as a sort of brief interlude and solo between more extensive performances. I take it that this part of the bill must have run something like this:

7. Crusty old grouch (used only of men).
8. Melville said he always regarded slavery as an "atheistical iniquity" but (unlike, say, Henry David Thoreau) he did not feel a personal obligation to devote his life to ending it. "Aint": the American text of *Moby-Dick* reflects not only Melville's casualness about punctuation (where one might now expect *ain't* to have an apostrophe) but also common usage in his time.
9. In Jewish and Christian doctrine, after Adam and Eve are banished from the Garden of Eden for eating fruit of the forbidden tree, an act that gives them knowledge of good and evil, Adam and all of his and Eve's descendants must earn their living by the sweat of their brows. *The Whale* (October 1851) omitted this humorous biblical allusion along with dozens of other jocular or otherwise disrespectful sallies throughout the book.
1. See Matthew 19.24, Mark 10.25, or Luke 18.25: "It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God." Not money itself but "the love of money" is said to be "the root of all evil" (1 Timothy 6.10).
2. Melville jokes about the location of the tiny privies on the sides of whaleships—toward the bow, while the captain's quarters are at the stern. The Greek philosopher Pythagoras (6th century B.C.E.) advised not eating beans because they cause flatulence.
3. Three Greek goddesses who control human destiny: Clotho spins the thread of life, Lachesis determines its length, and Atropos cuts it off.

"Grand Contested Election for the Presidency of the United States.
"WHALING VOYAGE BY ONE ISHMAEL.
"BLOODY BATTLE IN AFFGHANISTAN."[4]

Though I cannot tell why it was exactly that those stage managers, the Fates, put me down for this shabby part of a whaling voyage, when others were set down for magnificent parts in high tragedies, and short and easy parts in genteel comedies, and jolly parts in farces—though I cannot tell why this was exactly; yet, now that I recall all the circumstances, I think I can see a little into the springs and motives which being cunningly presented to me under various disguises, induced me to set about performing the part I did, besides cajoling me into the delusion that it was a choice resulting from my own unbiased freewill and discriminating judgment.

Chief among these motives was the overwhelming idea of the great whale himself. Such a portentous and mysterious monster roused all my curiosity. Then the wild and distant seas where he rolled his island bulk; the undeliverable, nameless perils of the whale; these, with all the attending marvels of a thousand Patagonian[5] sights and sounds, helped to sway me to my wish. With other men, perhaps, such things would not have been inducements; but as for me, I am tormented with an everlasting itch for things remote. I love to sail forbidden seas, and land on barbarous coasts. Not ignoring what is good, I am quick to perceive a horror, and could still be social with it—would they let me—since it is but well to be on friendly terms with all the inmates of the place one lodges in.[6]

By reason of these things, then, the whaling voyage was welcome; the great flood-gates of the wonder-world swung open, and in the wild conceits that swayed me to my purpose, two and two[7] there floated into my inmost soul, endless processions of the whale, and, midmost of them all, one grand hooded phantom,[8] like a snow hill in the air.

CHAPTER 2

THE CARPET-BAG[1]

I stuffed a shirt or two into my old carpet-bag, tucked it under my arm, and started for Cape Horn and the Pacific. Quitting the good city of old Manhatto, I duly arrived in New Bedford. It was on a Saturday night in December. Much was I disappointed upon learning that the little packet

4. Many now-unfamiliar spellings were common in 1851 and are retained in this edition.
5. First of many references to Patagonia, the forbidding southernmost region of Argentina, between the Andes and the Atlantic, to the north of Cape Horn.
6. Melville had read in the second part of *Religio Medici* (A doctor's religion), 1643, the eloquent claim by Sir Thomas Browne (1605–1682) to have "no antipathy" whether "in diet, humor, air, anything," including no national prejudices or repugnances. Browne specifies further: "I cannot start at the presence of a serpent, scorpion, lizard, or salamander; at the sight of a toad or viper I find in me no desire to take up a stone to destroy them."
7. See Genesis 7.9 ("There went in two and two unto Noah into the ark, the male and the female, as God had commanded Noah"), but in these anticipatory "loomings" Ishmael multiplies the number of whales infinitely.
8. I.e., Moby Dick.
1. Bag made of carpet fabric, for traveling light. The still-current *carpetbagger* (one who moves fast into strange territory to exploit some situation) was not coined for another decade and a half, at the end of the Civil War.

for Nantucket had already sailed, and that no way of reaching that place would offer, till the following Monday.

As most young candidates for the pains and penalties of whaling stop at this same New Bedford, thence to embark on their voyage, it may as well be related that I, for one, had no idea of so doing. For my mind was made up to sail in no other than a Nantucket craft, because there was a fine, boisterous something about everything connected with that famous old island, which amazingly pleased me. Besides though New Bedford has of late been gradually monopolizing the business of whaling, and though in this matter poor old Nantucket is now much behind her, yet Nantucket was her great original—the Tyre of this Carthage;[2]—the place where the first dead American whale was stranded. Where else but from Nantucket did those aboriginal whalemen, the Red-Men, first sally out in canoes to give chase to the Leviathan? And where but from Nantucket, too, did that first adventurous little sloop put forth, partly laden with imported cobble-stones—so goes the story—to throw at the whales, in order to discover when they were nigh enough to risk a harpoon from the bowsprit?[3]

Now having a night, a day, and still another night following before me in New Bedford, ere I could embark for my destined port, it became a matter of concernment where I was to eat and sleep meanwhile. It was a very dubious-looking, nay, a very dark and dismal night, bitingly cold and cheerless. I knew no one in the place. With anxious grapnels[4] I had sounded my pocket, and only brought up a few pieces of silver,—So, wherever you go, Ishmael, said I to myself, as I stood in the middle of a dreary street shouldering my bag, and comparing the gloom towards the north with the darkness towards the south—wherever in your wisdom you may conclude to lodge for the night, my dear Ishmael, be sure to inquire the price, and don't be too particular.

With halting steps I paced the streets, and passed the sign of "The Crossed Harpoons"—but it looked too expensive and jolly there. Further on, from the bright red windows of the "Sword-Fish Inn," there came such fervent rays, that it seemed to have melted the packed snow and ice from before the house, for everywhere else the congealed frost lay ten inches thick in a hard, asphaltic pavement,—rather weary for me, when I struck my foot against the flinty projections, because from hard, remorseless service the soles of my boots were in a most miserable plight. Too expensive and jolly, again thought I, pausing one moment to watch the broad glare in the street, and hear the sounds of the tinkling glasses within. But go on, Ishmael, said I at last; don't you hear? get away from before the door; your patched boots are stopping the way. So on I went. I now by instinct followed the streets that took me waterward, for there, doubtless, were the cheapest, if not the cheeriest inns.

Such dreary streets! blocks of blackness, not houses, on either hand, and here and there a candle, like a candle moving about in a tomb. At this hour of the night, of the last day of the week, that quarter of the town proved all but deserted. But presently I came to a smoky light proceeding from a low, wide building, the door of which stood invitingly open. It had a careless look, as if it were meant for the uses of the public; so, entering,

2. Mediterranean maritime cities of antiquity. Phoenicians from Tyre (in modern Syria) founded Carthage (in modern Tunisia), in the 9th century B.C.E.
3. The spar projecting from the ship's bow.
4. Small anchors with several hooks for dragging; here, his hands.

the first thing I did was to stumble over an ash-box in the porch. Ha! thought I, ha, as the flying particles almost choked me, are these ashes from that destroyed city, Gomorrah?[5] But "The Crossed Harpoons," and "The Sword-Fish?"—this, then, must needs be the sign of "The Trap." However, I picked myself up and hearing a loud voice within, pushed on and opened a second, interior door.

It seemed the great Black Parliament sitting in Tophet. A hundred black faces turned round in their rows to peer; and beyond, a black Angel of Doom[6] was beating a book in a pulpit. It was a negro church; and the preacher's text was about the blackness of darkness,[7] and the weeping and wailing and teeth-gnashing there.[8] Ha, Ishmael, muttered I, backing out, Wretched entertainment at the sign of "The Trap!"

Moving on, I at last came to a dim sort of out-hanging light not far from the docks, and heard a forlorn creaking in the air; and looking up, saw a swinging sign over the door with a white painting upon it, faintly representing a tall straight jet of misty spray, and these words underneath—"The Spouter-Inn:—Peter Coffin."

Coffin?—Spouter?—Rather ominous in that particular connexion, thought I. But it is a common name in Nantucket, they say, and I suppose this Peter here is an emigrant from there. As the light looked so dim, and the place, for the time, looked quiet enough, and the dilapidated little wooden house itself looked as if it might have been carted here from the ruins of some burnt district, and as the swinging sign had a poverty-stricken sort of creak to it, I thought that here was the very spot for cheap lodgings, and the best of pea coffee.[9]

It was a queer sort of place—a gable-ended old house, one side palsied as it were, and leaning over sadly. It stood on a sharp bleak corner, where that tempestuous wind Euroclydon kept up a worse howling than ever it did about poor Paul's tossed craft. Euroclydon,[1] nevertheless, is a mighty pleasant zephyr to any one in-doors, with his feet on the hob quietly toasting for bed. "In judging of that tempestuous wind called Euroclydon," says an old writer—of whose works I possess the only copy extant—"it maketh a marvellous difference, whether thou lookest out at it from a glass window where the frost is all on the outside, or whether thou observest it from that sashless window, where the frost is on both sides, and of which the wight Death is the only glazier."[2] True enough, thought I, as this passage occurred to my mind—old black-letter,[3] thou reasonest well. Yes, these eyes are windows, and this body of mine is the house. What a pity they didn't stop up the chinks and the crannies though, and thrust in a little lint here and there. But it's too late to make any improvements now. The universe is finished; the copestone is on, and the chips were carted

5. In Genesis 19, God destroys Sodom and Gomorrah, the wicked cities of the plain, by raining brimstone and fire upon them out of heaven.
6. Not biblical (*doom* does not occur in the King James Bible).
7. From Jude 1.13; it was also familiar to Melville from Thomas Carlyle's *Sartor Resartus* (1833–34), bk. 2, ch. 4.
8. From Matthew 8.12: "But the children of the kingdom shall be cast out into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth."
9. Cheap crushed chickpea beverage, the "best" of which is a poor substitute for real coffee.
1. A "tempestuous wind" that buffets the Apostle Paul's ship after the master and owner ignore his warnings (Acts 27).
2. One who makes and installs window glass. Having invented the "old writer" and the quotation from him, Ishmael then explicates the passage.
3. Book in which the type resembles the script of medieval manuscripts.

off a million years ago. Poor Lazarus[4] there, chattering his teeth against the curbstone for his pillow, and shaking off his tatters with his shiverings, he might plug up both ears with rags, and put a corn-cob into his mouth, and yet that would not keep out the tempestuous Euroclydon. Euroclydon! says old Dives, in his red silken wrapper (he had a redder one afterwards)—pooh, pooh! What a fine frosty night; how Orion glitters; what northern lights![5] Let them talk of their oriental summer climes of everlasting conservatories; give me the privilege of making my own summer with my own coals.

But what thinks Lazarus? Can he warm his blue hands by holding them up to the grand northern lights? Would not Lazarus rather be in Sumatra[6] than here? Would he not far rather lay him down lengthwise along the line of the equator; yea, ye gods! go down to the fiery pit itself, in order to keep out this frost?

Now, that Lazarus should lie stranded there on the curbstone before the door of Dives, this is more wonderful than that an iceberg should be moored to one of the Moluccas.[7] Yet Dives himself, he too lives like a Czar in an ice palace made of frozen sighs, and being a president of a temperance society,[8] he only drinks the tepid tears of orphans.

But no more of this blubbering now, we are going a-whaling, and there is plenty of that yet to come. Let us scrape the ice from our frosted feet, and see what sort of a place this "Spouter" may be.

CHAPTER 3

THE SPOUTER-INN

Entering that gable-ended Spouter-Inn, you found yourself in a wide, low, straggling entry with old-fashioned wainscots, reminding one of the bulwarks[1] of some condemned old craft. On one side hung a very large oil-painting so thoroughly besmoked, and every way defaced, that in the unequal cross-lights by which you viewed it, it was only by diligent study and a series of systematic visits to it, and careful inquiry of the neighbors, that you could any way arrive at an understanding of its purpose. Such unaccountable masses of shades and shadows, that at first you almost thought some ambitious young artist, in the time of the New England hags,[2] had endeavored to delineate chaos bewitched. But by dint of much and earnest contemplation, and oft repeated ponderings, and especially by throwing open the little window towards the back of the entry, you at

4. In Luke 16.19–31, the beggar whom the angels carry to Abraham's bosom in heaven, while the merciless rich man ("old Dives") suffers in the fires of hell.
5. The aurora borealis, greenish flashes from the northern sky. "Orion": major constellation.
6. East Indian island.
7. Equatorial Pacific islands.
8. In the mid-19th century, Americans organized attempts to reduce alcoholism (like the Washingtonian Society of the 1840s) but, not understanding addiction, often failed by advocating moderation, not abstinence. "Ice palaces": built annually for the czar in St. Petersburg, Russia, where Peter the Great (1672–1725) had his winter palace. Ishmael imagines a rich man as the president of such a society, while living like a czar at the expense of the poor and orphans.
1. Low plank wall around the top deck.
2. Women accused of witchcraft in 17th-century Salem. During the writing of *Moby-Dick*, Melville read with great interest a scholarly study of the persecution of witches (see Geoffrey Sanborn in the Bibliography).

last came to the conclusion that such an idea, however wild, might not be altogether unwarranted.

But what most puzzled and confounded you was a long, limber, portentous, black mass of something hovering in the centre of the picture over three blue, dim, perpendicular lines floating in a nameless yeast. A boggy, soggy, squitchy picture truly, enough to drive a nervous man distracted. Yet was there a sort of indefinite, half-attained, unimaginable sublimity about it that fairly froze you to it, till you involuntarily took an oath with yourself to find out what that marvellous painting meant. Ever and anon a bright, but, alas, deceptive idea would dart you through.—It's the Black Sea in a midnight gale.—It's the unnatural combat of the four primal elements.—It's a blasted heath.—It's a Hyperborean winter scene.—It's the breaking-up of the ice-bound stream of Time.[3] But at last all these fancies yielded to that one portentous something in the picture's midst. *That* once found out, and all the rest were plain. But stop; does it not bear a faint resemblance to a gigantic fish? even the great leviathan[4] himself?

In fact, the artist's design seemed this: a final theory of my own, partly based upon the aggregated opinions of many aged persons with whom I conversed upon the subject. The picture represents a Cape-Horner in a great hurricane; the half-foundered ship weltering there with its three dismantled masts alone visible; and an exasperated whale, purposing to spring clean over the craft, is in the enormous act of impaling himself upon the three mastheads.

The opposite wall of this entry was hung all over with a heathenish array of monstrous clubs and spears. Some were thickly set with glittering teeth resembling ivory saws; others were tufted with knots of human hair; and one was sickle-shaped, with a vast handle sweeping round like the segment made in the new-mown grass by a long-armed mower. You shuddered as you gazed, and wondered what monstrous cannibal and savage could ever have gone a death-harvesting with such a hacking, horrifying implement. Mixed with these were rusty old whaling lances and harpoons all broken and deformed. Some were storied weapons. With this once long lance, now wildly elbowed, fifty years ago did Nathan Swain kill fifteen whales between a sunrise and a sunset. And that harpoon—so like a corkscrew now—was flung in Javan seas, and run away with by a whale, years afterwards slain off the Cape of Blanco.[5] The original iron entered nigh the tail, and, like a restless needle sojourning in the body of a man, travelled full forty feet, and at last was found imbedded in the hump.

Crossing this dusky entry, and on through yon low-arched way—cut through what in old times must have been a great central chimney with fire-places all round—you enter the public room. A still duskier place is this, with such low ponderous beams above, and such old wrinkled planks

3. Ishmael's conjectures about the subject of the painting include chaos, the state of the universe before the creation (see *Paradise Lost* 2.890 ff.); the "Black Sea," in western Asia; the "primal elements" of earth, air, fire, and water; a "blasted heath," as in *Macbeth* 1.3.77 or *Paradise Lost* 1.615; a "winter scene" in the imaginary sunny Hyperborean region beyond the North Wind; and the "breaking up of the ice-bound stream of Time," compared to the booming spring breakup of the Hudson River ice Melville had witnessed near Albany. Finally (in the following paragraph), he concludes it's a whaleship in a tempest off Cape Horn with a sperm whale impaled on its three mastheads.
4. The first of many uses of this word to mean "whale."
5. I.e., the whale carried the harpoon from the East Indies (Java) to this cape off the Peruvian coast of South America.

beneath, that you would almost fancy you trod some old craft's cockpits, especially of such a howling night, when this corner-anchored old ark rocked so furiously. On one side stood a long, low, shelf-like table covered with cracked glass cases, filled with dusty rarities gathered from this wide world's remotest nooks. Projecting from the further angle of the room stands a dark-looking den—the bar—a rude attempt at a right whale's head. Be that how it may, there stands the vast arched bone of the whale's jaw, so wide, a coach might almost drive beneath it. Within are shabby shelves, ranged round with old decanters, bottles, flasks; and in those jaws of swift destruction, like another cursed Jonah[6] (by which name indeed they called him), bustles a little withered old man, who, for their money, dearly sells the sailors deliriums and death.

Abominable are the tumblers into which he pours his poison. Though true cylinders without—within, the villanous green goggling glasses deceitfully tapered downwards to a cheating bottom. Parallel meridians rudely pecked into the glass, surround these footpads' goblets.[7] Fill to *this* mark, and your charge is but a penny; to *this* a penny more; and so on to the full glass—the Cape Horn measure,[8] which you may gulp down for a shilling.

Upon entering the place I found a number of young seamen gathered about a table, examining by a dim light divers specimens of *skrimshander*.[9] I sought the landlord, and telling him I desired to be accommodated with a room, received for answer that his house was full—not a bed unoccupied. "But avast,"[1] he added, tapping his forehead, "you haint no objections to sharing a harpooneer's blanket, have ye? I s'pose you are goin' a whalin', so you'd better get used to that sort of thing."

I told him that I never liked to sleep two in a bed;[2] that if I should ever do so, it would depend upon who the harpooneer might be, and that if he (the landlord) really had no other place for me, and the harpooneer was not decidedly objectionable, why rather than wander further about a strange town on so bitter a night, I would put up with the half of any decent man's blanket.

"I thought so. All right; take a seat. Supper?—you want supper? Supper'll be ready directly."

I sat down on an old wooden settle, carved all over like a bench on the Battery. At one end a ruminating tar was still further adorning it with his jack-knife, stooping over and diligently working away at the space between his legs. He was trying his hand at a ship under full sail, but he didn't make much headway, I thought.

At last some four or five of us were summoned to our meal in an adjoining room. It was cold as Iceland—no fire at all—the landlord said he couldn't afford it. Nothing but two dismal tallow candles, each in a winding sheet.[3]

6. The story of Jonah and the great fish is in Jonah 1–2. "Swift destruction": see 2 Peter 2.1, where "false prophets" and "false teachers" shall bring "upon themselves swift destruction."
7. The doubly deceitful glasses taper rather than being true cylinders and sit on false bottoms, so they look deeper than they are; these glasses rob drinkers as flagrantly as thieves lurking along roads rob passersby.
8. A full glass, thought to keep the drinker warm in such a frigid place as Cape Horn.
9. I.e., "scrimshaw"; see also Ch. 57, paragraph two.
1. Stop. Ishmael's humor here depends on the contrast of the landlord's dialect with his own rather prissy formality.
2. Putting more than one in a bed or several on the floor together was common in crowded inns and homes. All American travelers (from the backwoods Abraham Lincoln to the Harvard-educated Ralph Waldo Emerson) had to make do with such accommodations.
3. Used to wrap a corpse; here, the shrouds of melted and congealed tallow-grease around the candles.

We were fain to button up our monkey jackets,[4] and hold to our lips cups of scalding tea with our half frozen fingers. But the fare was of the most substantial kind—not only meat and potatoes, but dumplings; good heavens! dumplings for supper! One young fellow in a green box coat, addressed himself to these dumplings in a most direful manner.

"My boy," said the landlord, "you'll have the nightmare to a dead sartainty."

"Landlord," I whispered, "that aint the harpooneer, is it?"

"Oh, no," said he, looking a sort of diabolically funny, "the harpooner is a dark complexioned chap. He never eats dumplings, he don't—he eats nothing but steaks, and likes 'em rare."

"The devil he does," says I. "Where is that harpooneer? Is he here?"

"He'll be here afore long," was the answer.

I could not help it, but I began to feel suspicious of this "dark complexioned" harpooneer. At any rate, I made up my mind that if it so turned out that we should sleep together, he must undress and get into bed before I did.

Supper over, the company went back to the bar-room, when, knowing not what else to do with myself, I resolved to spend the rest of the evening as a looker on.

Presently a rioting noise was heard without. Starting up, the landlord cried, "That's the Grampus's crew. I seed her reported in the offing this morning; a three years' voyage, and a full ship. Hurrah, boys; now we'll have the latest news from the Feegees."[5]

A tramping of sea boots was heard in the entry; the door was flung open, and in rolled a wild set of mariners enough. Enveloped in their shaggy watch coats, and with their heads muffled in woollen comforters,[6] all bedarned and ragged, and their beards stiff with icicles, they seemed an eruption of bears from Labrador. They had just landed from their boat, and this was the first house they entered. No wonder, then, that they made a straight wake for the whale's mouth—the bar—when the wrinkled little old Jonah, there officiating, soon poured them out brimmers all round. One complained of a bad cold in his head, upon which Jonah mixed him a pitch-like potion of gin and molasses, which he swore was a sovereign cure for all colds and catarrhs whatsoever, never mind of how long standing, or whether caught off the coast of Labrador, or on the weather side of an ice-island.

The liquor soon mounted into their heads, as it generally does even with the arrantest topers newly landed from sea, and they began capering about most obstreperously.

I observed, however, that one of them held somewhat aloof, and though he seemed desirous not to spoil the hilarity of his shipmates by his own sober face, yet upon the whole he refrained from making as much noise as the rest. This man interested me at once; and since the sea-gods had ordained that he should soon become my shipmate (though but a sleeping-partner[7] one, so far as this narrative is concerned), I will here venture upon a little description of him. He stood full six feet in height, with noble shoulders, and

4. Tight-fitting, waist-length coats.
5. The Fiji Islands in the southwest Pacific.
6. Big knitted scarves. "Watch coats": long overcoats for standing watch in cold or stormy weather.
7. Not someone who shares a bunk (which would not happen in a whaler, but might happen in a ship in wartime—one sailor vacating a bunk so an off-duty sailor could sleep in it), but a secret, or silent, partner, like someone who invests money but never takes any visible part in managing a business. Bulkington's importance to the book, in other words, may be greater than would appear from the number of times he takes part in the action.

a chest like a coffer-dam.[8] I have seldom seen such brawn in a man. His face was deeply brown and burnt, making his white teeth dazzling by the contrast; while in the deep shadows of his eyes floated some reminiscences that did not seem to give him much joy. His voice at once announced that he was a Southerner, and from his fine stature, I thought he must be one of those tall mountaineers from the Alleganian Ridge in Virginia. When the revelry of his companions had mounted to its height, this man slipped away unobserved, and I saw no more of him till he became my comrade[9] on the sea. In a few minutes, however, he was missed by his shipmates, and being, it seems, for some reason a huge favorite with them, they raised a cry of "Bulkington! Bulkington! where's Bulkington?" and darted out of the house in pursuit of him.

It was now about nine o'clock, and the room seeming almost supernaturally quiet after these orgies, I began to congratulate myself upon a little plan that had occurred to me just previous to the entrance of the seamen.

No man prefers to sleep two in a bed. In fact, you would a good deal rather not sleep with your own brother. I don't know how it is, but people like to be private when they are sleeping. And when it comes to sleeping with an unknown stranger, in a strange inn, in a strange town, and that stranger a harpooneer, then your objections indefinitely multiply. Nor was there any earthly reason why I as a sailor should sleep two in a bed, more than anybody else; for sailors no more sleep two in a bed at sea, than bachelor Kings do ashore. To be sure they all sleep together in one apartment, but you have your own hammock,[1] and cover yourself with your own blanket, and sleep in your own skin.

The more I pondered over this harpooneer, the more I abominated the thought of sleeping with him. It was fair to presume that being a harpooneer, his linen or woollen,[2] as the case might be, would not be of the tidiest, certainly none of the finest. I began to twitch all over. Besides, it was getting late, and any decent harpooneer ought to be home and going bedwards. Suppose now, he should tumble in upon me at midnight—how could I tell from what vile hole he had been coming?

"Landlord! I've changed my mind about that harpooneer.—I shan't sleep with him. I'll try the bench here."

"Just as you please; I'm sorry I cant spare ye a table-cloth for a mattress, and it's a plaguy rough board here"—feeling of the knots and notches. "But wait a bit, Skrimshander; I've got a carpenter's plane there in the bar—wait, I say, and I'll make ye snug enough." So saying he procured the plane; and with his old silk handkerchief first dusting the bench, vigorously set to planing away at my bed, the while grinning like an ape. The shavings flew right and left; till at last the plane-iron came bump against an indestructible knot. The landlord was near spraining his wrist, and I told him for heaven's sake to quit—the bed was soft enough to suit me, and I did not know how all the planing in the world could make eider down of a pine plank. So gathering up the shavings with another grin, and throwing them into the great stove in the middle of the room, he went about his business, and left me in a brown study.[3]

8. A watertight box fixed to the side of a ship for making repairs below the waterline.
9. Elsewhere only Queequeg is called Ishmael's comrade.
1. Bed, bunk. Warships, including the one on which Melville had served, had actual hammocks, but whaleships had narrow bunks.
2. Underwear.
3. Profound meditative state (idiomatic).

I now took the measure of the bench, and found that it was a foot too short; but that could be mended with a chair. But it was a foot too narrow, and the other bench in the room was about four inches higher than the planed one—so there was no yoking them. I then placed the first bench lengthwise along the only clear space against the wall, leaving a little interval between, for my back to settle down in. But I soon found that there came such a draught of cold air over me from under the sill of the window, that this plan would never do at all, especially as another current from the rickety door met the one from the window, and both together formed a series of small whirlwinds in the immediate vicinity of the spot where I had thought to spend the night.

The devil fetch that harpooneer, thought I, but stop, couldn't I steal a march on him—bolt his door inside, and jump into his bed, not to be wakened by the most violent knockings? It seemed no bad idea; but upon second thoughts I dismissed it. For who could tell but what the next morning, so soon as I popped out of the room, the harpooneer might be standing in the entry, all ready to knock me down!

Still, looking round me again, and seeing no possible chance of spending a sufferable night unless in some other person's bed, I began to think that after all I might be cherishing unwarrantable prejudices against this unknown harpooneer. Thinks I, I'll wait awhile; he must be dropping in before long. I'll have a good look at him then, and perhaps we may become jolly good bedfellows after all—there's no telling.

But though the other boarders kept coming in by ones, twos, and threes, and going to bed, yet no sign of my harpooneer.

"Landlord!" said I, "what sort of a chap is he—does he always keep such late hours?" It was now hard upon twelve o'clock.

The landlord chuckled again with his lean chuckle, and seemed to be mightily tickled at something beyond my comprehension. "No," he answered, "generally he's an airley bird—airley to bed and airley to rise—yes, he's the bird what catches the worm.[4] But to-night he went out a peddling, you see, and I don't see what on airth keeps him so late, unless, may be, he can't sell his head."

"Can't sell his head?—What sort of a bamboozling story is this you are telling me?" getting into a towering rage. "Do you pretend to say, landlord, that this harpooneer is actually engaged this blessed Saturday night, or rather Sunday morning, in peddling his head around this town?"

"That's precisely it," said the landlord, "and I told him he couldn't sell it here, the market's overstocked."

"With what?" shouted I.

"With heads to be sure; ain't there too many heads in the world?"

"I tell you what it is, landlord," said I, quite calmly, "you'd better stop spinning that yarn to me—I'm not green."[5]

"May be not," taking out a stick and whittling a toothpick, "but I rayther guess you'll be done *brown*[6] if that ere harpooner hears you a slanderin' his head."

4. The landlord quotes two proverbs (the first of which is a couplet concluding "Makes a man healthy, wealthy, and wise").
5. Innocent, naive, and therefore gullible.
6. Overcooked, mistreated.

"I'll break it for him," said I, now flying into a passion again at this unaccountable farrago of the landlord's.

"It's broke a'ready," said he.

"Broke," said I—"*broke*, do you mean?"

"Sartain, and that's the very reason he can't sell it, I guess."

"Landlord," said I, going up to him as cool as Mt. Hecla in a snow storm,[7]—"landlord, stop whittling. You and I must understand one another, and that too without delay. I come to your house and want a bed; you tell me you can only give me half a one; that the other half belongs to a certain harpooneer. And about this harpooneer, whom I have not yet seen, you persist in telling me the most mystifying and exasperating stories, tending to beget in me an uncomfortable feeling towards the man whom you design for my bedfellow—a sort of connexion, landlord, which is an intimate and confidential one in the highest degree. I now demand of you to speak out and tell me who and what this harpooneer is, and whether I shall be in all respects safe to spend the night with him. And in the first place, you will be so good as to unsay that story about selling his head, which if true I take to be good evidence that this harpooneer is stark mad, and I've no idea of sleeping with a madman; and you, sir, *you* I mean, landlord, *you*, sir, by trying to induce me to do so knowingly, would thereby render yourself liable to a criminal prosecution."

"Wall," said the landlord, fetching a long breath, "that's a purty long sarmon for a chap that rips a little now and then. But be easy, be easy, this here harpooneer I have been tellin' you of has just arrived from the south seas, where he bought up a lot of 'balmed New Zealand heads (great curios, you know), and he's sold all on 'em but one, and that one he's trying to sell to-night, cause to-morrow's Sunday, and it would not do to be sellin' human heads about the streets when folks is goin' to churches. He wanted to, last Sunday, but I stopped him just as he was goin' out of the door with four heads strung on a string, for all the airth like a string of inions."

This account cleared up the otherwise unaccountable mystery, and showed that the landlord after all, had had no idea of fooling me—but at the same time what could I think of a harpooneer who stayed out of a Saturday night clean into the holy Sabbath, engaged in such a cannibal business as selling the heads of dead idolators?

"Depend upon it, landlord, that harpooneer is a dangerous man."

"He pays reg'lar," was the rejoinder. "But come, it's getting dreadful late, you had better be turning flukes[8]—it's a nice bed: Sal and me slept in that ere bed the night we were spliced. There's plenty room for two to kick about in that bed; it's an almighty big bed that. Why, afore we give it up, Sal used to put our Sam and little Johnny in the foot of it. But I got a dreaming and sprawling about one night, and somehow, Sam got pitched on the floor, and came near breaking his arm. Arter that, Sal said it wouldn't do. Come along here, I'll give ye a glim[9] in a jiffy;" and so saying he lighted a candle and held it towards me, offering to lead the way. But I stood irresolute; when looking at a clock in the corner, he exclaimed, "I vum[1]

7. Externally cool but inwardly furious. Mt. Hecla, in Iceland, had shown spectacular volcanic activity as recently as September 2, 1845.
8. Turn into bed like a diving whale. "Flukes": the tail, "two broad, firm, flat palms" (Ch. 86).
9. Light.
1. Vow, swear.

it's Sunday—you won't see that harpooneer to-night; he's come to anchor somewhere—come along then; *do* come; *won't* ye come?"

I considered the matter a moment, and then up stairs we went, and I was ushered into a small room, cold as a clam, and furnished, sure enough, with a prodigious bed, almost big enough indeed for any four harpooneers to sleep abreast.

"There," said the landlord, placing the candle on a crazy old sea chest that did double duty as a wash-stand and centre table; "there, make yourself comfortable now, and good night to ye." I turned round from eyeing the bed, but he had disappeared.

Folding back the counterpane, I stooped over the bed. Though none of the most elegant, it yet stood the scrutiny tolerably well. I then glanced round the room; and besides the bedstead and centre table, could see no other furniture belonging to the place, but a rude shelf, the four walls, and a papered fireboard representing a man striking[2] a whale. Of things not properly belonging to the room, there was a hammock lashed up, and thrown upon the floor in one corner; also a large seaman's bag, containing the harpooneer's wardrobe no doubt, in lieu of a land trunk. Likewise, there was a parcel of outlandish bone fish hooks on the shelf over the fireplace, and a tall harpoon standing at the head of the bed.

But what is this on the chest? I took it up, and held it close to the light, and felt it, and smelt it, and tried every way possible to arrive at some satisfactory conclusion concerning it. I can compare it to nothing but a large door mat, ornamented at the edges with little tinkling tags something like the stained porcupine quills round an Indian moccasin. There was a hole or slit in the middle of this mat, the same as you see in South American ponchos. But could it be possible that any sober harpooneer would get into a door mat, and parade the streets of any Christian town in that sort of guise? I put it on, to try it, and it weighed me down like a hamper, being uncommonly shaggy and thick, and I thought a little damp, as though this mysterious harpooneer had been wearing it of a rainy day. I went up in it to a bit of glass stuck against the wall, and I never saw such a sight in my life. I tore myself out of it in such a hurry that I gave myself a kink in the neck.

I sat down on the side of the bed, and commenced thinking about this head-peddling harpooneer, and his door mat. After thinking some time on the bed-side, I got up and took off my monkey jacket, and then stood in the middle of the room thinking. I then took off my coat, and thought a little more in my shirt sleeves. But beginning to feel very cold now, half undressed as I was, and remembering what the landlord said about the harpooneer's not coming home at all that night, it being so very late, I made no more ado, but jumped out of my pantaloons and boots, and then blowing out the light tumbled into bed, and commended myself to the care of heaven.

Whether that mattress was stuffed with corn-cobs or broken crockery, there is no telling, but I rolled about a good deal, and could not sleep for a long time. At last I slid off into a light doze, and had pretty nearly made a good offing towards the land of Nod, when I heard a heavy footfall in the passage, and saw a glimmer of light come into the room from under the door.

Lord save me, thinks I, that must be the harpooneer, the infernal head-peddler. But I lay perfectly still, and resolved not to say a word till spoken to.

2. Harpooning. "Fireboard": a covering for closing a fireplace when not in use.

Holding a light in one hand, and that identical New Zealand head in the other, the stranger entered the room, and without looking towards the bed, placed his candle a good way off from me on the floor in one corner, and then began working away at the knotted cords of the large bag I before spoke of as being in the room. I was all eagerness to see his face, but he kept it averted for some time while employed in unlacing the bag's mouth. This accomplished, however, he turned round—when, good heavens! what a sight! Such a face! It was of a dark, purplish, yellow color, here and there stuck over with large, blackish looking squares. Yes, it's just as I thought, he's a terrible bedfellow; he's been in a fight, got dreadfully cut, and here he is, just from the surgeon. But at that moment he chanced to turn his face so towards the light, that I plainly saw they could not be sticking-pasters at all, those black squares on his cheeks. They were stains of some sort or other. At first I knew not what to make of this; but soon an inkling of the truth occurred to me. I remembered a story of a white man—a whaleman too—who, falling among the cannibals, had been tattooed by them. I concluded that this harpooneer, in the course of his distant voyages, must have met with a similar adventure. And what is it, thought I, after all! It's only his outside; a man can be honest in any sort of skin. But then, what to make of his unearthly complexion, that part of it, I mean, lying round about, and completely independent of the squares of tattooing. To be sure, it might be nothing but a good coat of tropical tanning; but I never heard of a hot sun's tanning a white man into a purplish yellow one. However, I had never been in the South Seas; and perhaps the sun there produced these extraordinary effects upon the skin. Now, while all these ideas were passing through me like lightning, this harpooneer never noticed me at all. But, after some difficulty having opened his bag, he commenced fumbling in it, and presently pulled out a sort of tomahawk,[3] and a seal-skin wallet with the hair on. Placing these on the old chest in the middle of the room, he then took the New Zealand head—a ghastly thing enough—and crammed it down into the bag. He now took off his hat—a new beaver hat[4]—when I came nigh singing out with fresh surprise. There was no hair on his head—none to speak of at least—nothing but a small scalp-knot twisted up on his forehead. His bald purplish head now looked for all the world like a mildewed skull. Had not the stranger stood between me and the door, I would have bolted out of it quicker than ever I bolted a dinner.

Even as it was, I thought something of slipping out of the window, but it was the second floor back.[5] I am no coward, but what to make of this head-peddling purple rascal altogether passed my comprehension. Ignorance is the parent of fear, and being completely nonplussed and confounded about the stranger, I confess I was now as much afraid of him as if it was the devil himself who had thus broken into my room at the dead of night. In fact, I was so afraid of him that I was not game enough just then to address him, and demand a satisfactory answer concerning what seemed inexplicable in him.

3. Then-common two-in-one curio, a Tomahawk pipe, with a hatchet at one end and a pipe lip at the other, so in actual frontier use it had been handy whichever way discussions went, for war or for peace.
4. Stovepipe hat, now familiar from photographs of Abraham Lincoln. Gregory Peck as Captain Ahab wore one in the 1956 Warner Brothers film, though the book puts Ahab in soft "slouched" hats (Chs. 30, 31, 130, 132).
5. Room at the back of the second-floor hallway.

Meanwhile, he continued the business of undressing, and at last showed his chest and arms. As I live, these covered parts of him were checkered with the same squares as his face; his back, too, was all over the same dark squares; he seemed to have been in a Thirty Years' War, and just escaped from it with a sticking-plaster shirt.[6] Still more, his very legs were marked, as if a parcel of dark green frogs were running up the trunks of young palms. It was now quite plain that he must be some abominable savage or other shipped aboard of a whaleman in the South Seas, and so landed in this Christian country. I quaked to think of it. A peddler of heads too—perhaps the heads of his own brothers. He might take a fancy to mine—heavens! look at that tomahawk!

But there was no time for shuddering, for now the savage went about something that completely fascinated my attention, and convinced me that he must indeed be a heathen. Going to his heavy grego, or wrapall, or dreadnaught,[7] which he had previously hung on a chair, he fumbled in the pockets, and produced at length a curious little deformed image with a hunch on its back, and exactly the color of a three days' old Congo baby. Remembering the embalmed head, at first I almost thought that this black manikin was a real baby preserved in some similar manner. But seeing that it was not at all limber, and that it glistened a good deal like polished ebony, I concluded that it must be nothing but a wooden idol, which indeed it proved to be. For now the savage goes up to the empty fire-place, and removing the papered fire-board, sets up this little hunchbacked image, like a tenpin, between the andirons. The chimney jambs and all the bricks inside were very sooty, so that I thought this fire-place made a very appropriate little shrine or chapel for his Congo idol.

I now screwed my eyes hard towards the half hidden image, feeling but ill at ease meantime—to see what was next to follow. First he takes about a double handful of shavings out of his grego pocket, and places them carefully before the idol; then laying a bit of ship biscuit on top and applying the flame from the lamp, he kindled the shavings into a sacrificial blaze. Presently, after many hasty snatches into the fire, and still hastier withdrawals of his fingers (whereby he seemed to be scorching them badly), he at last succeeded in drawing out the biscuit; then blowing off the heat and ashes a little, he made a polite offer of it to the little negro. But the little devil did not seem to fancy such dry sort of fare at all; he never moved his lips. All these strange antics were accompanied by still stranger guttural noises from the devotee, who seemed to be praying in a sing-song or else singing some pagan psalmody or other, during which his face twitched about in the most unnatural manner. At last extinguishing the fire, he took the idol up very unceremoniously, and bagged it again in his grego pocket as carelessly as if he were a sportsman bagging a dead woodcock.

All these queer proceedings increased my uncomfortableness, and seeing him now exhibiting strong symptoms of concluding his business operations, and jumping into bed with me, I thought it was high time, now or

6. One made up of bandages, such as might cover various wounds suffered during the long 17th-century European war.
7. Three kinds of heavy overcoats, the humor arising from Ishmael's difficulty of defining Queequeg's garment.

never, before the light was put out, to break the spell in which I had so long been bound.

But the interval I spent in deliberating what to say, was a fatal one. Taking up his tomahawk from the table, he examined the head of it for an instant, and then holding it to the light, with his mouth at the handle, he puffed out great clouds of tobacco smoke. The next moment the light was extinguished, and this wild cannibal, tomahawk between his teeth, sprang into bed with me. I sang out, I could not help it now; and giving a sudden grunt of astonishment he began feeling me.

Stammering out something, I knew not what, I rolled away from him against the wall, and then conjured him, whoever or whatever he might be, to keep quiet, and let me get up and light the lamp again. But his guttural responses satisfied me at once that he but ill comprehended my meaning.

"Who-e debel[8] you?"—he at last said—"you no speak-e, dam-me, I kill-e." And so saying the lighted tomahawk began flourishing about me in the dark.

"Landlord, for God's sake, Peter Coffin!" shouted I. "Landlord! Watch! Coffin! Angels! save me!"

"Speak-e! tell-ee me who-ee be, or dam-me, I kill-e!" again growled the cannibal, while his horrid flourishings of the tomahawk scattered the hot tobacco ashes about me till I thought my linen would get on fire. But thank heaven, at that moment the landlord came into the room light in hand, and leaping from the bed I ran up to him.

"Don't be afraid now," said he, grinning again. "Queequeg here wouldn't harm a hair of your head."

"Stop your grinning," shouted I, "and why didn't you tell me that that infernal harpooneer was a cannibal?"

"I thought ye know'd it;—didn't I tell ye, he was a peddlin' heads around town?—but turn flukes again and go to sleep. Queequeg, look here—you sabbee me, I sabbee you—this man sleepe you—you sabbee?"—

"Me sabbee plenty"—grunted Queequeg, puffing away at his pipe and sitting up in bed.

"You gettee in," he added, motioning to me with his tomahawk, and throwing the clothes to one side. He really did this in not only a civil but a really kind and charitable way. I stood looking at him a moment. For all his tattooings he was on the whole a clean, comely looking cannibal. What's all this fuss I have been making about, thought I to myself—the man's a human being just as I am: he has just as much reason to fear me, as I have to be afraid of him. Better sleep with a sober cannibal than a drunken Christian.

"Landlord," said I, "tell him to stash his tomahawk there, or pipe, or whatever you call it; tell him to stop smoking, in short, and I will turn in with him. But I don't fancy having a man smoking in bed with me. It's dangerous. Besides, I aint insured."

This being told to Queequeg, he at once complied, and again politely motioned me to get into bed—rolling over to one side as much as to say—I wont touch a leg of ye.

8. Devil. Queequeg speaks in the presumably universally understood pidgin English, which the landlord uses just below.

"Good night, landlord," said I, "you may go."
I turned in, and never slept better in my life.

CHAPTER 4

THE COUNTERPANE

Upon waking next morning about daylight, I found Queequeg's arm thrown over me in the most loving and affectionate manner. You had almost thought I had been his wife. The counterpane was of patchwork, full of odd little parti-colored squares and triangles; and this arm of his tattooed all over with an interminable Cretan labyrinth[1] of a figure, no two parts of which were of one precise shade—owing I suppose to his keeping his arm at sea unmethodically in sun and shade, his shirt sleeves irregularly rolled up at various times—this same arm of his, I say, looked for all the world like a strip of that same patchwork quilt. Indeed, partly lying on it as the arm did when I first awoke, I could hardly tell it from the quilt, they so blended their hues together; and it was only by the sense of weight and pressure that I could tell that Queequeg was hugging me.

My sensations were strange. Let me try to explain them. When I was a child, I well remember a somewhat similar circumstance that befell me; whether it was a reality or a dream, I never could entirely settle. The circumstance was this. I had been cutting up some caper or other—I think it was trying to crawl up the chimney, as I had seen a little sweep do a few days previous; and my stepmother who, somehow or other, was all the time whipping me, or sending me to bed supperless,—my mother dragged me by the legs out of the chimney and packed me off to bed, though it was only two o'clock in the afternoon of the 21st June, the longest day in the year in our hemisphere. I felt dreadfully. But there was no help for it, so up stairs I went to my little room in the third floor, undressed myself as slowly as possible so as to kill time, and with a bitter sigh got between the sheets.

I lay there dismally calculating that sixteen entire hours must elapse before I could hope for a resurrection. Sixteen hours in bed! the small of my back ached to think of it. And it was so light too; the sun shining in at the window, and a great rattling of coaches in the streets, and the sound of gay voices all over the house. I felt worse and worse—at last I got up, dressed, and softly going down in my stockinged feet, sought out my stepmother, and suddenly threw myself at her feet, beseeching her as a particular favor to give me a good slippering for my misbehavior; anything indeed but condemning me to lie abed such an unendurable length of time. But she was the best and most conscientious of stepmothers, and back I had to go to my room. For several hours I lay there broad awake, feeling a great deal worse than I have ever done since, even from the greatest subsequent misfortunes. At last I must have fallen into a troubled nightmare of a doze; and slowly waking from it—half steeped in dreams—I opened my eyes, and the before sun-lit room was now wrapped in outer darkness. Instantly I felt a shock running through all my frame; nothing was to be seen, and nothing was to be heard; but a supernatural hand seemed placed

1. In Greek mythology, the maze that imprisoned the half-human, half-bull Minotaur.

in mine. My arm hung over the counterpane, and the nameless, unimaginable, silent form or phantom, to which the hand belonged, seemed closely seated by my bedside. For what seemed ages piled on ages, I lay there, frozen with the most awful fears, not daring to drag away my hand; yet ever thinking that if I could but stir it one single inch, the horrid spell would be broken. I knew not how this consciousness at last glided away from me; but waking in the morning, I shudderingly remembered it all, and for days and weeks and months afterwards I lost myself in confounding attempts to explain the mystery. Nay, to this very hour, I often puzzle myself with it.

Now, take away the awful fear, and my sensations at feeling the supernatural hand in mine were very similar, in their strangeness, to those which I experienced on waking up and seeing Queequeg's pagan arm thrown round me. But at length all the past night's events soberly recurred, one by one, in fixed reality, and then I lay only alive to the comical predicament. For though I tried to move his arm—unlock his bridegroom clasp—yet, sleeping as he was, he still hugged me tightly, as though naught but death should part us twain. I now strove to rouse him—"Queequeg!"—but his only answer was a snore. I then rolled over, my neck feeling as if it were in a horse-collar; and suddenly felt a slight scratch. Throwing aside the counterpane, there lay the tomahawk sleeping by the savage's side, as if it were a hatchet-faced baby. A pretty pickle, truly, thought I; abed here in a strange house in the broad day, with a cannibal and a tomahawk! "Queequeg!—in the name of goodness, Queequeg, wake!" At length, by dint of much wriggling, and loud and incessant expostulations upon the unbecomingness of his hugging a fellow male in that matrimonial sort of style, I succeeded in extracting a grunt; and presently, he drew back his arm, shook himself all over like a Newfoundland dog just from the water, and sat up in bed, stiff as a pike-staff, looking at me, and rubbing his eyes as if he did not altogether remember how I came to be there, though a dim consciousness of knowing something about me seemed slowly dawning over him. Meanwhile, I lay quietly eyeing him, having no serious misgivings now, and bent upon narrowly observing so curious a creature. When, at last, his mind seemed made up touching the character of his bedfellow, and he became, as it were, reconciled to the fact; he jumped out upon the floor, and by certain signs and sounds gave me to understand that, if it pleased me, he would dress first and then leave me to dress afterwards, having the whole apartment to myself. Thinks I, Queequeg, under the circumstances, this is a very civilized overture; but, the truth is, these savages have an innate sense of delicacy, say what you will; it is marvellous how essentially polite they are. I pay this particular compliment to Queequeg, because he treated me with so much civility and consideration, while I was guilty of great rudeness; staring at him from the bed, and watching all his toilette motions; for the time my curiosity getting the better of my breeding. Nevertheless, a man like Queequeg you don't see every day, he and his ways were well worth unusual regarding.

He commenced dressing at top by donning his beaver hat, a very tall one, by the by, and then—still minus his trowsers—he hunted up his boots. What under the heavens he did it for, I cannot tell, but his next movement was to crush himself—boots in hand, and hat on—under the bed; when, from sundry violent gaspings and strainings, I inferred he was hard at work booting himself; though by no law of propriety that I ever

heard of, is any man required to be private when putting on his boots. But Queequeg, do you see, was a creature in the transition state—neither caterpillar nor butterfly. He was just enough civilized to show off his outlandishness in the strangest possible manner. His education was not yet completed. He was an undergraduate. If he had not been a small degree civilized, he very probably would not have troubled himself with boots at all; but then, if he had not been still a savage, he never would have dreamt of getting under the bed to put them on. At last, he emerged with his hat very much dented and crushed down over his eyes, and began creaking and limping about the room, as if, not being much accustomed to boots, his pair of damp, wrinkled cowhide ones—probably not made to order either—rather pinched and tormented him at the first go off of a bitter cold morning.

Seeing, now, that there were no curtains to the window, and that the street being very narrow, the house opposite commanded a plain view into the room, and observing more and more the indecorous figure that Queequeg made, staving[2] about with little else but his hat and boots on; I begged him as well as I could, to accelerate his toilet somewhat, and particularly to get into his pantaloons as soon as possible. He complied, and then proceeded to wash himself. At that time in the morning any Christian would have washed his face; but Queequeg, to my amazement, contented himself with restricting his ablutions to his chest, arms, and hands. He then donned his waistcoat, and taking up a piece of hard soap on the wash-stand centre-table, dipped it into water and commenced lathering his face. I was watching to see where he kept his razor, when lo and behold, he takes the harpoon from the bed corner, slips out the long wooden stock, unsheathes the head, whets it a little on his boot, and striding up to the bit of mirror against the wall, begins a vigorous scraping, or rather harpooning of his cheeks. Thinks I, Queequeg, this is using Rogers's[3] best cutlery with a vengeance. Afterwards I wondered the less at this operation when I came to know of what fine steel the head of a harpoon is made, and how exceedingly sharp the long straight edges are always kept.

The rest of his toilet was soon achieved, and he proudly marched out of the room, wrapped up in his great pilot monkey jacket, and sporting his harpoon like a marshal's baton.

CHAPTER 5

BREAKFAST

I quickly followed suit, and descending into the bar-room accosted the grinning landlord very pleasantly. I cherished no malice towards him, though he had been skylarking with me not a little in the matter of my bedfellow.

However, a good laugh is a mighty good thing, and rather too scarce a good thing; the more's the pity. So, if any one man, in his own proper person, afford stuff for a good joke to anybody, let him not be backward, but let him cheerfully allow himself to spend and be spent in that way. And the man that has anything bountifully laughable about him, be sure there is more in that man than you perhaps think for.

2. Stalking about rapidly.
3. American silverware company.

The bar-room was now full of the boarders who had been dropping in the night previous, and whom I had not as yet had a good look at. They were nearly all whalemen; chief mates, and second mates, and third mates, and sea carpenters, and sea coopers, and sea blacksmiths, and harpooneers, and ship keepers;[1] a brown and brawny company, with bosky beards; an unshorn, shaggy set, all wearing monkey jackets for morning gowns.

You could pretty plainly tell how long each one had been ashore. This young fellow's healthy cheek is like a sun-toasted pear in hue, and would seem to smell almost as musky; he cannot have been three days landed from his Indian voyage. That man next him looks a few shades lighter; you might say a touch of satin wood[2] is in him. In the complexion of a third still lingers a tropic tawn, but slightly bleached withal; *he* doubtless has tarried whole weeks ashore. But who could show a cheek like Queequeg? which, barred with various tints, seemed like the Andes' western slope, to show forth in one array, contrasting climates, zone by zone.

"Grub, ho!" now cried the landlord, flinging open a door, and in we went to breakfast.

They say that men who have seen the world, thereby become quite at ease in manner, quite self-possessed in company. Not always, though: Ledyard, the great New England traveller, and Mungo Park,[3] the Scotch one; of all men, they possessed the least assurance in the parlor. But perhaps the mere crossing of Siberia in a sledge drawn by dogs as Ledyard did, or the taking a long solitary walk on an empty stomach, in the negro heart of Africa, which was the sum of poor Mungo's performances—this kind of travel, I say, may not be the very best mode of attaining a high social polish. Still, for the most part, that sort of thing is to be had anywhere.

These reflections just here are occasioned by the circumstance that after we were all seated at the table, and I was preparing to hear some good stories about whaling; to my no small surprise, nearly every man maintained a profound silence. And not only that, but they looked embarrassed. Yes, here were a set of sea-dogs, many of whom without the slightest bashfulness had boarded great whales on the high seas—entire strangers to them—and duelled them dead without winking; and yet, here they sat at a social breakfast table—all of the same calling, all of kindred tastes—looking round as sheepishly at each other as though they had never been out of sight of some sheepfold among the Green Mountains.[4] A curious sight; these bashful bears, these timid warrior whalemen!

But as for Queequeg—why, Queequeg sat there among them—at the head of the table, too, it so chanced; as cool as an icicle. To be sure I cannot say much for his breeding. His greatest admirer could not have cordially justified his bringing his harpoon into breakfast with him, and using it there without ceremony; reaching over the table with it, to the imminent jeopardy of many heads, and grappling the beefsteaks towards him. But *that* was certainly very coolly done by him, and every one knows that in most people's estimation, to do anything coolly is to do it genteelly.

1. Crewmen who work on the ship only and do not man its whaleboats.
2. Pale brown East Indian mahogany.
3. John Ledyard and Mungo Park were late-18th-century explorers.
4. In Vermont, but with a pun on *green* meaning "unsophisticated."

We will not speak of all Queequeg's peculiarities here; how he eschewed coffee and hot rolls, and applied his undivided attention to beefsteaks, done rare. Enough, that when breakfast was over he withdrew like the rest into the public room, lighted his tomahawk-pipe, and was sitting there quietly digesting and smoking with his inseparable hat on, when I sallied out for a stroll.

CHAPTER 6

THE STREET

If I had been astonished at first catching a glimpse of so outlandish an individual as Queequeg circulating among the polite society of a civilized town, that astonishment soon departed upon taking my first daylight stroll through the streets of New Bedford.

In thoroughfares nigh the docks, any considerable seaport will frequently offer to view the queerest looking nondescripts from foreign parts. Even in Broadway and Chestnut streets,[1] Mediterranean mariners will sometimes jostle the affrighted ladies. Regent street is not unknown to Lascars and Malays;[2] and at Bombay, in the Apollo Green, live Yankees[3] have often scared the natives. But New Bedford beats all Water street and Wapping.[4] In these last-mentioned haunts you see only sailors; but in New Bedford, actual cannibals stand chatting at street corners; savages outright; many of whom yet carry on their bones unholy flesh. It makes a stranger stare.

But, besides the Feegeeans, Tongatabooans, Erromanggoans, Pannangians, and Brighggians,[5] and, besides the wild specimens of the whaling-craft which unheeded reel about the streets, you will see other sights still more curious, certainly more comical. There weekly arrive in this town scores of green Vermonters and New Hampshire men, all athirst for gain and glory in the fishery. They are mostly young, of stalwart frames; fellows who have felled forests, and now seek to drop the axe and snatch the whale-lance. Many are as green as the Green Mountains whence they came. In some things you would think them but a few hours old. Look there! that chap strutting round the corner. He wears a beaver hat and swallow-tailed coat, girdled with a sailor-belt and sheath-knife. Here comes another with a sou'-wester and a bombazine cloak.[6]

No town-bred dandy will compare with a country-bred one—I mean a downright bumpkin dandy—a fellow that, in the dog-days, will mow his two acres in buckskin gloves for fear of tanning his hands. Now when a country dandy like this takes it into his head to make a distinguished reputation, and joins the great whale-fishery, you should see the comical

1. Mediterranean sailors are seen on Broadway (in New York) and on Chestnut Street (in Philadelphia).
2. Lascars from India and Malays from the East Indies show up in Regent Street in London.
3. In Bombay, India, the natives may be frightened by American sailors ("live Yankees"), a P. T. Barnum–like joke.
4. Water Street is in Liverpool, and Wapping is in London.
5. South Sea islanders, like Queequeg, except for the apparently fictional Brighggians.
6. The greenhorn outfits are comically incongruous: in a letter found in 1998 and now in the Berkshire Athenaeum in Pittsfield, Massachusetts, Melville's brother Gansevoort wrote to their younger brother Allan on January 14, 1841: "Herman sent to [his friend Eli] Fly as a parting souvenir his vest & pantaloons. The coat was exchanged at New Bedford for duck shirts &c. At sea shore toggery is of no use to a sailor." Having sailed on a merchant ship to Liverpool in 1839, Melville was no greenhorn or hayseed when he went whaling.

things he does upon reaching the seaport. In bespeaking his sea-outfit, he orders bell-buttons to his waistcoats; straps to his canvas trowsers. Ah, poor Hay-Seed! how bitterly will burst those straps in the first howling gale, when thou art driven, straps, buttons, and all, down the throat of the tempest.

But think not that this famous town has only harpooneers, cannibals, and bumpkins to show her visitors. Not at all. Still New Bedford is a queer place. Had it not been for us whalemen, that tract of land would this day perhaps have been in as howling[7] condition as the coast of Labrador. As it is, parts of her back country are enough to frighten one, they look so bony. The town itself is perhaps the dearest[8] place to live in, in all New England. It is a land of oil, true enough: but not like Canaan,[9] a land, also, of corn and wine. The streets do not run with milk; nor in the spring-time do they pave them with fresh eggs. Yet, in spite of this, nowhere in all America will you find more patrician-like houses, parks and gardens more opulent, than in New Bedford. Whence came they? how planted upon this once scraggy scoria[1] of a country?

Go and gaze upon the iron emblematical harpoons round yonder lofty mansion, and your question will be answered. Yes; all these brave houses and flowery gardens came from the Atlantic, Pacific, and Indian oceans. One and all, they were harpooned and dragged up hither from the bottom of the sea. Can Herr Alexander[2] perform a feat like that?

In New Bedford, fathers, they say, give whales for dowers to their daughters, and portion off their nieces with a few porpoises a-piece. You must go to New Bedford to see a brilliant wedding; for, they say, they have reservoirs of oil in every house, and every night recklessly burn their lengths in spermaceti candles.[3]

In summer time, the town is sweet to see; full of fine maples—long avenues of green and gold. And in August, high in air, the beautiful and bountiful horse-chestnuts, candelabra-wise, proffer the passer-by their tapering upright cones of congregated blossoms. So omnipotent is art; which in many a district of New Bedford has superinduced bright terraces of flowers upon the barren refuse rocks thrown aside at creation's final day.

And the women of New Bedford, they bloom like their own red roses. But roses only bloom in summer; whereas the fine carnation of their cheeks is perennial as sunlight in the seventh heavens.[4] Elsewhere match that bloom of theirs, ye cannot, save in Salem,[5] where they tell me the young girls breathe such musk, their sailor sweethearts smell them miles off shore, as though they were drawing nigh the odorous Moluccas[6] instead of the Puritanic sands.

7. Desolate.
8. Most expensive.
9. The Promised Land into which Moses led the Hebrews. Biblical phrases tell of its resources of "milk and honey" (Exodus 3.8) and "corn, wine, and oil, and honey" (2 Chronicles 31.5).
1. Rough, cindery lava.
2. German magician who performed in the United States in the 1840s. Melville may have seen him in Troy, New York, in 1846.
3. Expensive candles made of oil from the sperm whale's head.
4. The highest of the Islamic heavens, where one feels extreme joy.
5. This tall story about Salem girls is a private joke for Nathaniel and Sophia Hawthorne, both Salemites.
6. The Spice Islands of east Indonesia.

CHAPTER 7

THE CHAPEL

In this same New Bedford there stands a Whaleman's Chapel,[1] and few are the moody fishermen, shortly bound for the Indian Ocean or Pacific, who fail to make a Sunday visit to the spot. I am sure that I did not.

Returning from my first morning stroll, I again sallied out upon this special errand. The sky had changed from clear, sunny cold, to driving sleet and mist. Wrapping myself in my shaggy jacket of the cloth called bearskin,[2] I fought my way against the stubborn storm. Entering, I found a small scattered congregation of sailors, and sailors' wives and widows. A muffled silence reigned, only broken at times by the shrieks of the storm. Each silent worshipper seemed purposely sitting apart from the other, as if each silent grief were insular and incommunicable. The chaplain had not yet arrived; and there these silent islands of men and women sat steadfastly eyeing several marble tablets, with black borders, masoned into the wall on either side the pulpit. Three of them ran something like the following, but I do not pretend to quote:—

SACRED
To the Memory
OF
JOHN TALBOT,
Who, at the age of eighteen, was lost overboard,
Near the Isle of Desolation,[3] off Patagonia,
November 1*st*, 1836.
THIS TABLET
Is erected to his Memory
BY HIS SISTER.

SACRED
To the Memory
OF
ROBERT LONG, WILLIS ELLERY,
NATHAN COLEMAN, WALTER CANNY,
SETH MACY, AND SAMUEL GLEIG,
Forming one of the boats' crews
OF
THE SHIP ELIZA,
Who were towed out of sight by a Whale,
On the Off-shore Ground[4] in the
PACIFIC,
December 31*st*, 1839.
THIS MARBLE
Is here placed by their surviving
S h i p m a t e s.

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1. Now the Seaman's Bethel on Johnny Cake Hill, rebuilt after a fire in 1866.
2. Coarse woolen cloth.
3. Uninhabited Chilean island off the tip of South America.
4. Pacific coastal waters of North America.

SACRED
To the Memory
OF
The late
CAPTAIN EZEKIEL HARDY,
Who in the bows of his boat was killed by a
Sperm Whale on the coast of Japan,
August 3*d*, 1833.
THIS TABLET
Is erected to his Memory
BY
HIS WIDOW.

Shaking off the sleet from my ice-glazed hat and jacket, I seated myself near the door, and turning sideways was surprised to see Queequeg near me. Affected by the solemnity of the scene, there was a wondering gaze of incredulous curiosity in his countenance. This savage was the only person present who seemed to notice my entrance; because he was the only one who could not read, and, therefore, was not reading those frigid inscriptions on the wall. Whether any of the relatives of the seamen whose names appeared there were now among the congregation, I knew not; but so many are the unrecorded accidents in the fishery, and so plainly did several women present wear the countenance if not the trappings[5] of some unceasing grief, that I feel sure that here before me were assembled those, in whose unhealing hearts the sight of those bleak tablets sympathetically caused the old wounds to bleed afresh.

Oh! ye whose dead lie buried beneath the green grass; who standing among flowers can say—here, *here* lies my beloved; ye know not the desolation that broods in bosoms like these. What bitter blanks in those black-bordered marbles which cover no ashes! What despair in those immovable inscriptions! What deadly voids and unbidden infidelities in the lines that seem to gnaw upon all Faith, and refuse resurrections to the beings who have placelessly perished without a grave. As well might those tablets stand in the cave of Elephanta[6] as here.

In what census of living creatures, the dead of mankind are included; why it is that a universal proverb says of them, that they tell no tales,[7] though containing more secrets than the Goodwin Sands;[8] how it is that to his name who yesterday departed for the other world, we prefix so significant and infidel a word, and yet do not thus entitle him, if he but embarks for the remotest Indies of this living earth; why the Life Insurance Companies pay death-forfeitures upon immortals; in what eternal, unstirring paralysis, and deadly, hopeless trance, yet lies antique Adam who died sixty round centuries ago;[9] how it is that we still refuse to be comforted for those who we nevertheless maintain are dwelling in unspeakable bliss; why all the living so strive to hush all the dead; wherefore but

5. Submerged echo of *Hamlet* 1.2.86, "the trappings and the suits of woe."
6. Immense cave temple on an island in the Bay of Bombay.
7. I.e., dead men tell no tales.
8. Shallows near the mouth of the Thames River where many ships have sunk.
9. According to a then-current biblical chronology.

the rumor of a knocking in a tomb will terrify a whole city. All these things are not without their meanings.

But Faith, like a jackal, feeds among the tombs, and even from these dead doubts she gathers her most vital hope.

It needs scarcely to be told, with what feelings, on the eve of a Nantucket voyage, I regarded those marble tablets, and by the murky light of that darkened, doleful day read the fate of the whalemen who had gone before me. Yes, Ishmael, the same fate may be thine. But somehow I grew merry again. Delightful inducements to embark, fine chance for promotion, it seems—aye, a stove boat will make me an immortal by brevet.[1] Yes, there is death in this business of whaling—a speechlessly quick chaotic bundling of a man into Eternity. But what then? Methinks we have hugely mistaken this matter of Life and Death. Methinks that what they call my shadow here on earth is my true substance. Methinks that in looking at things spiritual, we are too much like oysters observing the sun through the water,[2] and thinking that thick water the thinnest of air. Methinks my body is but the lees[3] of my better being. In fact take my body who will, take it I say, it is not me. And therefore three cheers for Nantucket; and come a stove body when they will, for stave my soul, Jove himself cannot.

CHAPTER 8

THE PULPIT

I had not been seated very long ere a man of a certain venerable robustness entered; immediately as the storm-pelted door flew back upon admitting him, a quick regardful eyeing of him by all the congregation, sufficiently attested that this fine old man was the chaplain. Yes, it was the famous Father Mapple,[1] so called by the whalemen, among whom he was a very great favorite. He had been a sailor and a harpooneer in his youth, but for many years past had dedicated his life to the ministry. At the time I now write of, Father Mapple was in the hardy winter of a healthy old age; that sort of old age which seems merging into a second flowering youth, for among all the fissures of his wrinkles, there shone certain mild gleams of a newly developing bloom—the spring verdure peeping forth even beneath February's snow. No one having previously heard his history, could for the first time behold Father Mapple without the utmost interest, because there were certain engrafted clerical peculiarities[2] about him, imputable to that adventurous maritime life he had led. When he entered I observed that he carried no umbrella, and certainly had not come in his carriage, for his tarpaulin hat ran down with melting sleet, and his great pilot cloth jacket seemed almost to drag him to the floor with the weight of the water it had absorbed. However, hat and coat and overshoes

1. An on-the-spot promotion during battle. "Stove boat": one broken up by a whale.
2. A figure reminiscent of the parable of the cave in Plato's *Republic*.
3. Dregs, last vestiges.

1. Partly modeled on a famous Boston sailor-preacher, Father Edward Taylor (1793–1871), and partly on Father Enoch Mudge, minister of the Seaman's Bethel 1832–42. Melville heard Mudge preach there on December 27, 1840, before embarking on the *Acushnet* for the Pacific.
2. Mannerism peculiar in a clergyman (not peculiar to clergymen).

were one by one removed, and hung up in a little space in an adjacent corner; when, arrayed in a decent suit, he quietly approached the pulpit.

Like most old fashioned pulpits, it was a very lofty one, and since a regular stairs to such a height would, by its long angle with the floor, seriously contract the already small area of the chapel, the architect, it seemed, had acted upon the hint of Father Mapple, and finished the pulpit without a stairs, substituting a perpendicular side ladder, like those used in mounting a ship from a boat at sea. The wife of a whaling captain had provided the chapel with a handsome pair of red worsted man-ropes for this ladder, which, being itself nicely headed, and stained with a mahogany color, the whole contrivance, considering what manner of chapel it was, seemed by no means in bad taste. Halting for an instant at the foot of the ladder, and with both hands grasping the ornamental knobs of the man-ropes, Father Mapple cast a look upwards, and then with a truly sailor-like but still reverential dexterity, hand over hand, mounted the steps as if ascending the main-top of his vessel.

The perpendicular parts of this side ladder, as is usually the case with swinging ones, were of cloth-covered rope, only the rounds were of wood, so that at every step there was a joint. At my first glimpse of the pulpit, it had not escaped me that however convenient for a ship, these joints in the present instance seemed unnecessary. For I was not prepared to see Father Mapple after gaining the height, slowly turn round, and stooping over the pulpit, deliberately drag up the ladder step by step, till the whole was deposited within, leaving him impregnable in his little Quebec.[3]

I pondered some time without fully comprehending the reason for this. Father Mapple enjoyed such a wide reputation for sincerity and sanctity, that I could not suspect him of courting notoriety by any mere tricks of the stage. No, thought I, there must be some sober reason for this thing; furthermore, it must symbolize something unseen. Can it be, then, that by that act of physical isolation, he signifies his spiritual withdrawal for the time, from all outward worldly ties and connexions? Yes, for replenished with the meat and wine of the word,[4] to the faithful man of God, this pulpit, I see, is a self-containing stronghold—a lofty Ehrenbreitstein,[5] with a perennial well of water within the walls.

But the side ladder was not the only strange feature of the place, borrowed from the chaplain's former sea-farings. Between the marble cenotaphs on either hand of the pulpit, the wall which formed its back was adorned with a large painting representing a gallant ship beating against a terrible storm off a lee coast of black rocks and snowy breakers.[6] But high above the flying scud[7] and dark-rolling clouds, there floated a little isle of sunlight, from which beamed forth an angel's face; and this bright face shed a distinct spot of radiance upon the ship's tossed deck, something like that silver plate now inserted into the Victory's plank where Nelson fell.[8] "Ah, noble ship," the angel seemed to say, "beat on, beat on, thou

3. Like that city's fortress above the St. Lawrence River which Melville saw on his honeymoon, in 1847.
4. I.e., the word of God, unlike the meat and wine of King Nebuchadnezzar, which the young Hebrew captive Daniel wisely refused (Daniel 1.5–8).
5. High fortress across the Rhine from Coblenz (visited by Melville in 1849).
6. Father Taylor's Boston chapel had a similar painting. "Lee": the side of the ship away from the wind, which threatens to blow her onto the coast (see Ch. 23).
7. Seafoam, blown high and fast.
8. After seeing relics of the British national hero Admiral Horatio Nelson at Greenwich in 1849, Melville (at Portsmouth) went aboard the preserved flagship the *Victory*, on which Nelson died while defeating the French fleet at Trafalgar in 1805.

noble ship, and bear a hardy helm; for lo! the sun is breaking through; the clouds are rolling off—serenest azure is at hand."

Nor was the pulpit itself without a trace of the same sea-taste that had achieved the ladder and the picture. Its panelled front was in the likeness of a ship's bluff bows,[9] and the Holy Bible rested on a projecting piece of scroll work, fashioned after a ship's fiddle-headed beak.[1]

What could be more full of meaning?—for the pulpit is ever this earth's foremost part; all the rest comes in its rear; the pulpit leads the world. From thence it is the storm of God's quick wrath is first descried, and the bow must bear the earliest brunt. From thence it is the God of breezes fair or foul is first invoked for favorable winds. Yes, the world's a ship on its passage out, and not a voyage complete; and the pulpit is its prow.

CHAPTER 9

THE SERMON

Father Mapple rose, and in a mild voice of unassuming authority ordered the scattered people to condense. "Starboard gangway, there! side away to larboard—larboard gangway to starboard! Midships! midships!"[1]

There was a low rumbling of heavy sea-boots among the benches, and a still slighter shuffling of women's shoes, and all was quiet again, and every eye on the preacher.

He paused a little; then kneeling in the pulpit's bows, folded his large brown hands across his chest, uplifted his closed eyes, and offered a prayer so deeply devout that he seemed kneeling and praying at the bottom of the sea.

This ended, in prolonged solemn tones, like the continual tolling of a bell in a ship that is foundering at sea in a fog—in such tones he commenced reading[2] the following hymn; but changing his manner towards the concluding stanzas, burst forth with a pealing exultation and joy[3]—

"The ribs and terrors in the whale,
Arched over me a dismal gloom,
While all God's sun-lit waves rolled by,
And left me deepening down to doom.

"I saw the opening maw of hell,
With endless pains and sorrows there;
Which none but they that feel can tell—
Oh, I was plunging to despair.

"In black distress, I called my God,
When I could scarce believe him mine,
He bowed his ear to my complaints—
No more the whale did me confine.

9. Full, square front.
1. An ornament of the bow curved like the scroll at the head of a violin.
1. I.e., those on the right should move left, and those on the left should move right, into the middle.
2. I.e., calling out the words line by line to the congregation, who do not hold their own books.
3. Adapted from Psalm 18 in the hymnbook of the Dutch Reformed Church, the church of Melville's mother's family, the Gansevoorts, descendants of Dutch immigrants to New Amsterdam (New York).

"With speed he flew to my relief,
As on a radiant dolphin borne;
Awful, yet bright as lightning shone
The face of my Deliverer God.

"My song for ever shall record
That terrible, that joyful hour;
I give the glory to my God,
His all the mercy and the power."

Nearly all joined in singing this hymn, which swelled high above the howling of the storm. A brief pause ensued; the preacher slowly turned over the leaves of the Bible, and at last, folding his hand down upon the proper page, said: "Beloved shipmates, clinch the last verse of the first chapter of Jonah—'And God had prepared a great fish to swallow up Jonah.'[4]

"Shipmates, this book, containing only four chapters—four yarns—is one of the smallest strands in the mighty cable of the Scriptures. Yet what depths of the soul does Jonah's deep sea-line sound![5] what a pregnant lesson to us is this prophet! What a noble thing is that canticle in the fish's belly! How billow-like and boisterously grand! We feel the floods surging over us; we sound with him to the kelpy[6] bottom of the waters; sea-weed and all the slime of the sea is about us! But *what* is this lesson that the book of Jonah teaches? Shipmates, it is a two-stranded lesson; a lesson to us all as sinful men, and a lesson to me as a pilot of the living God. As sinful men, it is a lesson to us all, because it is a story of the sin, hard-heartedness, suddenly awakened fears, the swift punishment, repentance, prayers, and finally the deliverance and joy of Jonah. As with all sinners among men, the sin of this son of Amittai was in his wilful disobedience of the command of God—never mind now what that command was, or how conveyed—which he found a hard command. But all the things that God would have us do are hard for us to do—remember that—and hence, he oftener commands us than endeavors to persuade. And if we obey God, we must disobey ourselves; and it is in this disobeying ourselves, wherein the hardness of obeying God consists.

"With this sin of disobedience in him, Jonah still further flouts at God, by seeking to flee from Him. He thinks that a ship made by men, will carry him into countries where God does not reign, but only the Captains of this earth. He skulks about the wharves of Joppa, and seeks a ship that's bound for Tarshish. There lurks, perhaps, a hitherto unheeded meaning here. By all accounts Tarshish could have been no other city than the modern Cadiz. That's the opinion of learned men. And where is Cadiz, shipmates? Cadiz is in Spain; as far by water, from Joppa, as Jonah could possibly have sailed in those ancient days, when the Atlantic was an almost unknown sea. Because Joppa, the modern Jaffa, shipmates, is on the most easterly coast of the Mediterranean, the Syrian; and Tarshish or Cadiz more than two thousand miles to the westward from that, just outside the

4. Adapted from Jonah 1.17: "Now the Lord had prepared a great fish to swallow up Jonah. And Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights."
5. Weighted rope dropped overboard to measure the depth of the sea bottom (a sounding).
6. Entangled with seaweed.

Straits of Gibraltar. See ye not then, shipmates, that Jonah sought to flee world-wide from God? Miserable man! Oh! most contemptible and worthy of all scorn; with slouched hat and guilty eye, skulking from his God; prowling among the shipping like a vile burglar hastening to cross the seas. So disordered, self-condemning is his look, that had there been policemen in those days, Jonah, on the mere suspicion of something wrong, had been arrested ere he touched a deck. How plainly he's a fugitive! no baggage, not a hat-box, valise, or carpet-bag,—no friends accompany him to the wharf with their adieux. At last, after much dodging search, he finds the Tarshish ship receiving the last items of her cargo; and as he steps on board to see its Captain in the cabin, all the sailors for the moment desist from hoisting in the goods, to mark the stranger's evil eye. Jonah sees this; but in vain he tries to look all ease and confidence; in vain essays his wretched smile. Strong intuitions of the man assure the mariners he can be no innocent. In their gamesome but still serious way, one whispers to the other—'Jack, he's robbed a widow;' or, 'Joe, do you mark him; he's a bigamist;' or, 'Harry lad, I guess he's the adulterer that broke jail in old Gomorrah, or belike, one of the missing murderers from Sodom.'[7] Another runs to read the bill that's stuck against the spile upon the wharf to which the ship is moored, offering five hundred gold coins for the apprehension of a parricide, and containing a description of his person. He reads, and looks from Jonah to the bill; while all his sympathetic shipmates now crowd round Jonah, prepared to lay their hands upon him. Frighted Jonah trembles, and summoning all his boldness to his face, only looks so much the more a coward. He will not confess himself suspected; but that itself is strong suspicion. So he makes the best of it; and when the sailors find him not to be the man that is advertised, they let him pass, and he descends into the cabin.

"'Who's there?' cries the Captain at his busy desk, hurriedly making out his papers for the Customs—'Who's there?' Oh! how that harmless question mangles Jonah! For the instant he almost turns to flee again. But he rallies. 'I seek a passage in this ship to Tarshish; how soon sail ye, sir?' Thus far the busy Captain had not looked up to Jonah, though the man now stands before him; but no sooner does he hear that hollow voice, than he darts a scrutinizing glance. 'We sail with the next coming tide,' at last he slowly answered, still intently eyeing him. 'No sooner, sir?'—'Soon enough for any honest man that goes a passenger.' Ha! Jonah, that's another stab. But he swiftly calls away the Captain from that scent. 'I'll sail with ye,'—he says,—'the passage money, how much is that?—I'll pay now.' For it is particularly written, shipmates, as if it were a thing not to be overlooked in this history, 'that he paid the fare thereof 'ere the craft did sail. And taken with the context, this is full of meaning.

"Now Jonah's Captain, shipmates, was one whose discernment detects crime in any, but whose cupidity exposes it only in the penniless. In this world, shipmates, sin that pays its way can travel freely, and without a passport; whereas Virtue, if a pauper, is stopped at all frontiers. So Jonah's Captain prepares to test the length of Jonah's purse, ere he judge him openly. He charges him thrice the usual sum; and it's assented to. Then the Captain knows that Jonah is a fugitive; but at the same time resolves

7. See p. 231, n. 4.

to help a flight that paves its rear with gold. Yet when Jonah fairly takes out his purse, prudent suspicions still molest the Captain. He rings every coin to find a counterfeit. Not a forger, any way, he mutters; and Jonah is put down for his passage. 'Point out my state-room, Sir,' says Jonah now, 'I'm travel-weary; I need sleep.' 'Thou look'st like it,' says the Captain, 'there's thy room.' Jonah enters, and would lock the door, but the lock contains no key.[8] Hearing him foolishly fumbling there, the Captain laughs lowly to himself, and mutters something about the doors of convicts' cells being never allowed to be locked within. All dressed and dusty as he is, Jonah throws himself into his berth, and finds the little state-room ceiling almost resting on his forehead. The air is close, and Jonah gasps. Then, in that contracted hole, sunk, too, beneath the ship's water-line, Jonah feels the heralding presentiment of that stifling hour, when the whale shall hold him in the smallest of his bowel's wards.

"Screwed at its axis against the side, a swinging lamp slightly oscillates in Jonah's room; and the ship, heeling over towards the wharf with the weight of the last bales received, the lamp, flame and all, though in slight motion, still maintains a permanent obliquity with reference to the room; though, in truth, infallibly straight itself, it but made obvious the false, lying levels among which it hung. The lamp alarms and frightens Jonah; as lying in his berth his tormented eyes roll round the place, and this thus far successful fugitive finds no refuge for his restless glance. But that contradiction in the lamp more and more appals him. The floor, the ceiling, and the side, are all awry. 'Oh! so my conscience hangs in me!' he groans, 'straight upward, so it burns; but the chambers of my soul are all in crookedness!'

"Like one who after a night of drunken revelry hies to his bed, still reeling, but with conscience yet pricking him, as the plungings of the Roman race-horse but so much the more strike his steel tags[9] into him; as one who in that miserable plight still turns and turns in giddy anguish, praying God for annihilation until the fit be passed; and at last amid the whirl of woe he feels, a deep stupor steals over him, as over the man who bleeds to death, for conscience is the wound, and there's naught to staunch it; so, after sore wrestlings in his berth, Jonah's prodigy of ponderous misery drags him drowning down to sleep.

"And now the time of tide has come; the ship casts off her cables; and from the deserted wharf the uncheered ship[1] for Tarshish, all careening, glides to sea. That ship, my friends, was the first of recorded smugglers! the contraband was Jonah. But the sea rebels; he will not bear the wicked burden. A dreadful storm comes on, the ship is like to break. But now when the boatswain calls all hands to lighten her; when boxes, bales, and jars are clattering overboard; when the wind is shrieking, and the men are yelling, and every plank thunders with trampling feet right over Jonah's head; in all this raging tumult, Jonah sleeps his hideous sleep. He sees no black sky and raging sea, feels not the reeling timbers, and little hears he or heeds he the far rush of the mighty whale, which even now with open mouth is cleaving the seas after him. Aye, shipmates, Jonah was gone down

8. Mapple makes the story accessible to his auditors by endowing the ancient biblical ship with familiar modern features.
9. Not spurs but sharp metal tips on leather harness.
1. For ships leaving on a voyage, final ceremonial cheers from shore and from crew were customary.

into the sides of the ship—a berth in the cabin as I have taken it, and was fast asleep. But the frightened master comes to him, and shrieks in his dead ear, 'What meanest thou, O sleeper! arise!' Startled from his lethargy by that direful cry, Jonah staggers to his feet, and stumbling to the deck, grasps a shroud,[2] to look out upon the sea. But at that moment he is sprung upon by a panther billow leaping over the bulwarks. Wave after wave thus leaps into the ship, and finding no speedy vent runs roaring fore and aft, till the mariners come nigh to drowning while yet afloat. And ever, as the white moon shows her affrighted face from the steep gullies in the blackness overhead, aghast Jonah sees the rearing bowsprit pointing high upward, but soon beat downward again towards the tormented deep.

"Terrors upon terrors run shouting through his soul. In all his cringing attitudes, the God-fugitive is now too plainly known. The sailors mark him; more and more certain grow their suspicions of him, and at last, fully to test the truth, by referring the whole matter to high Heaven, they fall to casting lots, to see for whose cause this great tempest was upon them. The lot is Jonah's; that discovered, then how furiously they mob him with their questions. 'What is thine occupation? Whence comest thou? Thy country? What people?' But mark now, my shipmates, the behavior of poor Jonah. The eager mariners but ask him who he is, and where from; whereas, they not only receive an answer to those questions, but likewise another answer to a question not put by them, but the unsolicited answer is forced from Jonah by the hard hand of God that is upon him.

"'I am a Hebrew,' he cries—and then—'I fear the Lord the God of Heaven who hath made the sea and the dry land!' Fear him, O Jonah? Aye, well mightest thou fear the Lord God *then!* Straightway, he now goes on to make a full confession; whereupon the mariners become more and more appalled, but still are pitiful. For when Jonah, not yet supplicating God for mercy, since he but too well knew the darkness of his deserts,—when wretched Jonah cries out to them to take him and cast him forth into the sea, for he knew that for *his* sake this great tempest was upon them; they mercifully turn from him, and seek by other means to save the ship. But all in vain; the indignant gale howls louder; then, with one hand raised invokingly to God, with the other they not unreluctantly lay hold of Jonah.

"And now behold Jonah taken up as an anchor and dropped into the sea; when instantly an oily calmness floats out from the east, and the sea is still, as Jonah carries down the gale with him, leaving smooth water behind. He goes down in the whirling heart of such a masterless commotion that he scarce heeds the moment when he drops seething into the yawning jaws awaiting him; and the whale shoots-to all his ivory teeth, like so many white bolts, upon his prison. Then Jonah prayed unto the Lord out of the fish's belly. But observe his prayer, and learn a weighty lesson. For sinful as he is, Jonah does not weep and wail for direct deliverance. He feels that his dreadful punishment is just. He leaves all his deliverance to God, contenting himself with this, that spite of all his pains and pangs, he will still look towards His holy temple. And here, shipmates, is true and faithful repentance; not clamorous for pardon, but grateful for punishment. And how pleasing to God was this conduct in Jonah, is shown in the eventual deliverance of him from the sea and the whale.

2. Rope from a mast to the ship's side.

Shipmates, I do not place Jonah before you to be copied for his sin but I do place him before you as a model for repentance. Sin not; but if you do, take heed to repent of it like Jonah."

While he was speaking these words, the howling of the shrieking, slanting storm without seemed to add new power to the preacher, who, when describing Jonah's sea-storm, seemed tossed by a storm himself. His deep chest heaved as with a ground-swell;[3] his tossed arms seemed the warring elements at work; and the thunders that rolled away from off his swarthy brow, and the light leaping from his eye, made all his simple hearers look on him with a quick fear that was strange to them.

There now came a lull in his look, as he silently turned over the leaves of the Book once more; and, at last, standing motionless, with closed eyes, for the moment, seemed communing with God and himself.

But again he leaned over towards the people, and bowing his head lowly, with an aspect of the deepest yet manliest humility, he spake these words:

"Shipmates, God has laid but one hand upon you; both his hands press upon me. I have read ye by what murky light may be mine the lesson that Jonah teaches to all sinners; and therefore to ye, and still more to me, for I am a greater sinner than ye. And now how gladly would I come down from this mast-head and sit on the hatches[4] there where you sit, and listen as you listen, while some one of you reads *me* that other and more awful lesson which Jonah teaches to *me*, as a pilot of the living God. How being an anointed pilot-prophet, or speaker of true things, and bidden by the Lord to sound those unwelcome truths in the ears of a wicked Nineveh, Jonah, appalled at the hostility he should raise, fled from his mission, and sought to escape his duty and his God by taking ship at Joppa. But God is everywhere; Tarshish he never reached. As we have seen, God came upon him in the whale, and swallowed him down to living gulfs of doom, and with swift slantings tore him along 'into the midst of the seas,' where the eddying depths sucked him ten thousand fathoms down, and 'the weeds were wrapped about his head,' and all the watery world of woe bowled over him. Yet even then beyond the reach of any plummet—'out of the belly of hell'—when the whale grounded upon the ocean's utmost bones, even then, God heard the engulphed, repenting prophet when he cried. Then God spake unto the fish; and from the shuddering cold and blackness of the sea, the whale came breeching up towards the warm and pleasant sun, and all the delights of air and earth; and 'vomited out Jonah upon the dry land;' when the word of the Lord came a second time; and Jonah, bruised and beaten—his ears, like two sea-shells, still multitudinously murmuring of the ocean—Jonah did the Almighty's bidding. And what was that, shipmates? To preach the Truth to the face of Falsehood! That was it!

"This, shipmates, this is that other lesson; and woe to that pilot of the living God who slights it. Woe to him whom this world charms from Gospel duty! Woe to him who seeks to pour oil upon the waters when God has brewed them into a gale! Woe to him who seeks to please rather than to appal! Woe to him whose good name is more to him than goodness! Woe to him who, in this world, courts not dishonor! Woe to him who would not be

3. Strong, wide undulation of the ocean, as from a distant storm or earthquake.
4. Here, lids covering the hatches, openings in the deck.

true, even though to be false were salvation! Yea, woe to him who, as the great Pilot Paul has it, while preaching to others is himself a castaway!"[5]

He drooped and fell away from himself for a moment; then lifting his face to them again, showed a deep joy in his eyes, as he cried out with a heavenly enthusiasm,—"But oh! shipmates! on the starboard hand of every woe, there is a sure delight; and higher the top of that delight, than the bottom of the woe is deep. Is not the main-truck higher than the kelson is low?[6] Delight is to him—a far, far upward, and inward delight—who against the proud gods and commodores of this earth, ever stands forth his own inexorable self. Delight is to him whose strong arms yet support him, when the ship of this base treacherous world has gone down beneath him. Delight is to him, who gives no quarter in the truth, and kills, burns, and destroys all sin though he pluck it out from under the robes of Senators and Judges. Delight,—top-gallant delight[7] is to him, who acknowledges no law or lord, but the Lord his God, and is only a patriot to heaven. Delight is to him, whom all the waves of the billows of the seas of the boisterous mob can never shake from this sure Keel of the Ages.[8] And eternal delight and deliciousness will be his, who coming to lay him down, can say with his final breath—O Father!—chiefly known to me by Thy rod[9]—mortal or immortal, here I die. I have striven to be Thine, more than to be this world's, or mine own. Yet this is nothing; I leave eternity to Thee; for what is man that he should live out the lifetime of his God?"[1]

He said no more, but slowly waving a benediction, covered his face with his hands, and so remained, kneeling, till all the people had departed, and he was left alone in the place.

CHAPTER 10

A BOSOM FRIEND

Returning to the Spouter-Inn from the Chapel, I found Queequeg there quite alone; he having left the Chapel before the benediction some time. He was sitting on a bench before the fire, with his feet on the stove hearth, and in one hand was holding close up to his face that little negro idol of his; peering hard into its face, and with a jack-knife gently whittling away at its nose, meanwhile humming to himself in his heathenish way.

But being now interrupted, he put up the image; and pretty soon, going to the table, took up a large book there, and placing it on his lap began counting the pages with deliberate regularity; at every fiftieth page—as I fancied—stopping a moment, looking vacantly around him, and giving utterance to a long-drawn gurgling whistle of astonishment. He would then begin again at the next fifty; seeming to commence at number one

5. Cf. 1 Corinthians 9.27: "lest . . . when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway."
6. I.e., there is less distance between deck and the timber bolted along the ship's keel ("kelson"), its lowest point, than between deck and the wooden cap topping the ship's highest mast ("main-truck"), from which her pennant is flown.
7. Highest ecstasy. "Top-gallant": the top (third) section of each mast, or the third sails above the deck.
8. God. In the A. M. Toplady hymn, Jesus is the "Rock of Ages."
9. Proverbs 13.24: "He that spareth his rod hateth his son: but he that loveth him chastiseth him betimes." ("Betimes": early, fittingly.)
1. The phrasing recalls Job 7.17: "What is man, that thou shouldest magnify him," or Job 15.14: "What is man, that he should be clean?"

each time, as though he could not count more than fifty, and it was only by such a large number of fifties being bound together, that his astonishment at the multitude of pages was excited.

With much interest I sat watching him. Savage though he was, and hideously marred about the face—at least to my taste—his countenance yet had a something in it which was by no means disagreeable. You cannot hide the soul. Through all his unearthly tattooings, I thought I saw the traces of a simple honest heart; and in his large, deep eyes, fiery black and bold, there seemed tokens of a spirit that would dare a thousand devils. And besides all this, there was a certain lofty bearing about the Pagan, which even his uncouthness could not altogether maim. He looked like a man who had never cringed and never had had a creditor. Whether it was, too, that his head being shaved, his forehead was drawn out in freer and brighter relief, and looked more expansive than it otherwise would, this I will not venture to decide; but certain it was his head was phrenologically[1] an excellent one. It may seem ridiculous, but it reminded me of General Washington's head, as seen in the popular busts of him. It had the same long regularly graded retreating slope from above the brows, which were likewise very projecting, like two long promontories thickly wooded on top. Queequeg was George Washington cannibalistically developed.

Whilst I was thus closely scanning him, half-pretending meanwhile to be looking out at the storm from the casement, he never heeded my presence, never troubled himself with so much as a single glance; but appeared wholly occupied with counting the pages of the marvellous book. Considering how sociably we had been sleeping together the night previous, and especially considering the affectionate arm I had found thrown over me upon waking in the morning, I thought this indifference of his very strange. But savages are strange beings; at times you do not know exactly how to take them. At first they are overawing; their calm self-collectedness of simplicity seems a Socratic wisdom.[2] I had noticed also that Queequeg never consorted at all, or but very little, with the other seamen in the inn. He made no advances whatever; appeared to have no desire to enlarge the circle of his acquaintances. All this struck me as mighty singular; yet, upon second thoughts, there was something almost sublime in it. Here was a man some twenty thousand miles from home, by the way of Cape Horn, that is—which was the only way he could get there—thrown among people as strange to him as though he were in the planet Jupiter; and yet he seemed entirely at his ease; preserving the utmost serenity; content with his own companionship; always equal to himself. Surely this was a touch of fine philosophy; though no doubt he had never heard there was such a thing as that. But, perhaps, to be true philosophers, we mortals should not be conscious of so living or so striving. So soon as I hear that such or such a man gives himself out for a philosopher, I conclude that, like the dyspeptic old woman, he must have "broken his digester."

As I sat there in that now lonely room; the fire burning low, in that mild stage when, after its first intensity has warmed the air, it then only glows to be looked at; the evening shades and phantoms gathering round the casements, and peering in upon us silent, solitary twain; the storm booming

1. According to charts drawn up by practitioners of the pseudoscience of phrenology, who claimed to be able to read character and ability by the conformation of a person's skull.
2. Like that of the Greek philosopher Socrates (470?–399 B.C.E.).

without in solemn swells; I began to be sensible of strange feelings. I felt a melting in me. No more my splintered heart and maddened hand were turned against the wolfish world. This soothing savage had redeemed it. There he sat, his very indifference speaking a nature in which there lurked no civilized hypocrisies and bland deceits. Wild he was; a very sight of sights to see; yet I began to feel myself mysteriously drawn towards him. And those same things that would have repelled most others, they were the very magnets that thus drew me. I'll try a pagan friend, thought I, since Christian kindness has proved but hollow courtesy. I drew my bench near him, and made some friendly signs and hints, doing my best to talk with him meanwhile. At first he little noticed these advances; but presently, upon my referring to his last night's hospitalities, he made out to ask me whether we were again to be bedfellows. I told him yes; whereat I thought he looked pleased, perhaps a little complimented.

We then turned over the book together, and I endeavored to explain to him the purpose of the printing, and the meaning of the few pictures that were in it. Thus I soon engaged his interest; and from that we went to jabbering the best we could about the various outer sights to be seen in this famous town. Soon I proposed a social smoke; and, producing his pouch and tomahawk, he quietly offered me a puff. And then we sat exchanging puffs from that wild pipe of his, and keeping it regularly passing between us.

If there yet lurked any ice of indifference towards me in the Pagan's breast, this pleasant, genial smoke we had, soon thawed it out, and left us cronies. He seemed to take to me quite as naturally and unbiddenly as I to him; and when our smoke was over, he pressed his forehead against mine, clasped me round the waist, and said that henceforth we were married; meaning, in his country's phrase, that we were bosom friends; he would gladly die for me, if need should be. In a countryman, this sudden flame of friendship would have seemed far too premature, a thing to be much distrusted; but in this simple savage those old rules would not apply.

After supper, and another social chat and smoke, we went to our room together. He made me a present of his embalmed head; took out his enormous tobacco wallet, and groping under the tobacco, drew out some thirty dollars in silver;[3] then spreading them on the table, and mechanically dividing them into two equal portions, pushed one of them towards me, and said it was mine. I was going to remonstrate; but he silenced me by pouring them into my trowsers' pockets. I let them stay. He then went about his evening prayers, took out his idol, and removed the paper fireboard. By certain signs and symptoms, I thought he seemed anxious for me to join him; but well knowing what was to follow, I deliberated a moment whether, in case he invited me, I would comply or otherwise.

I was a good Christian; born and bred in the bosom of the infallible Presbyterian Church. How then could I unite with this wild idolator in worshipping his piece of wood? But what is worship? thought I. Do you suppose now, Ishmael, that the magnanimous God of heaven and earth—pagans and all included—can possibly be jealous of an insignificant bit of black wood? Impossible! But what is worship?—to do the will of God—*that* is worship. And what is the will of God?—to do to my fellow man what I would have my

3. The money may consist of thirty silver dollars or of a mixture of coins of different values, but the phrasing is formulaic, from the thirty pieces of silver the high priests paid Judas to betray Jesus. See also p. 352, n. 2.

fellow man to do to me—*that* is the will of God. Now, Queequeg is my fellow man. And what do I wish that this Queequeg would do to me? Why, unite with me in my particular Presbyterian form of worship.[4] Consequently, I must then unite with him in his; ergo, I must turn idolator. So I kindled the shavings; helped prop up the innocent little idol; offered him burnt biscuit with Queequeg; salamed before him twice or thrice; kissed his nose; and that done, we undressed and went to bed, at peace with our own consciences and all the world. But we did not go to sleep without some little chat.

How it is I know not; but there is no place like a bed for confidential disclosures between friends. Man and wife, they say, there open the very bottom of their souls to each other; and some old couples often lie and chat over old times till nearly morning. Thus, then, in our hearts' honeymoon, lay I and Queequeg—a cosy, loving pair.

CHAPTER 11

NIGHTGOWN

We had lain thus in bed, chatting and napping at short intervals, and Queequeg now and then affectionately throwing his brown tattooed legs over mine, and then drawing them back; so entirely sociable and free and easy were we; when, at last, by reason of our confabulations, what little nappishness remained in us altogether departed, and we felt like getting up again, though day-break was yet some way down the future.

Yes, we became very wakeful; so much so that our recumbent position began to grow wearisome, and by little and little we found ourselves sitting up; the clothes well tucked around us, leaning against the head-board with our four knees drawn up close together, and our two noses bending over them, as if our knee-pans were warming-pans.[1] We felt very nice and snug, the more so since it was so chilly out of doors; indeed out of bed-clothes too, seeing that there was no fire in the room. The more so, I say, because truly to enjoy bodily warmth, some small part of you must be cold, for there is no quality in this world that is not what it is merely by contrast. Nothing exists in itself. If you flatter yourself that you are all over comfortable, and have been so a long time, then you cannot be said to be comfortable any

4. Ishmael's questions and conclusions are blasphemous, according to Exodus 20.3–5: "Thou shalt have no other gods before me. Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing it is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: For I the Lord thy God am a jealous God." With his first book, *Typee* (1846), in which he criticized missionaries in the South Seas for all but enslaving their converts, Melville had stirred up the wrath of Presbyterians and other evangelistic Protestants. (Churches appealing to people from the middle and lower classes were more apt to conduct aggressive missionary programs than, say, the Episcopalian Church.) One of the harshest attacks on *Typee* had appeared in the Presbyterian New York *Evangelist*. As Melville might have foreseen, this passage in *Moby-Dick* infuriated many reviewers. The Congregationalist New York *Independent* (November 20, 1851) warned that the "Judgment day" would hold Melville liable "for not turning his talents to better account." The Harper brothers (staunch Methodists) were also said to be at fault: "The book-maker and the book-publisher had better do their work with a view to the trial it must undergo at the bar of God." (The reviewer in the *Methodist Quarterly Review* felt "bound to say" that *Moby-Dick* contained "a number of flings at religion, and even of vulgar immoralities that render it unfit for general circulation" and regretted "that Mr. Melville should allow himself to sink so low.") More than any other single factor besides for the lack of an international copyright law, Melville's defiance of the religious press cost him his career as a writer.

1. Long-handled lidded pans that could be filled with live coals and shoved between cold sheets to warm a bed.

more. But if, like Queequeg and me in the bed, the tip of your nose or the crown of your head be slightly chilled, why then, indeed, in the general consciousness you feel most delightfully and unmistakably warm. For this reason a sleeping apartment should never be furnished with a fire, which is one of the luxurious discomforts of the rich. For the height of this sort of deliciousness is to have nothing but the blanket between you and your snugness and the cold of the outer air. Then there you lie like the one warm spark in the heart of an arctic crystal.

We had been sitting in this crouching manner for some time, when all at once I thought I would open my eyes; for when between sheets, whether by day or by night, and whether asleep or awake, I have a way of always keeping my eyes shut, in order the more to concentrate the snugness of being in bed. Because no man can ever feel his own identity aright except his eyes be closed; as if darkness were indeed the proper element of our essences, though light be more congenial to our clayey part. Upon opening my eyes then, and coming out of my own pleasant and self-created darkness into the imposed and coarse outer gloom of the unilluminated twelve-o'clock-at-night, I experienced a disagreeable revulsion. Nor did I at all object to the hint from Queequeg that perhaps it were best to strike a light, seeing that we were so wide awake; and besides he felt a strong desire to have a few quiet puffs from his Tomahawk. Be it said, that though I had felt such a strong repugnance to his smoking in the bed the night before, yet see how elastic our stiff prejudices grow when love once comes to bend them. For now I liked nothing better than to have Queequeg smoking by me, even in bed, because he seemed to be full of such serene household joy then. I no more felt unduly concerned for the landlord's policy of insurance. I was only alive to the condensed confidential comfortableness of sharing a pipe and a blanket with a real friend. With our shaggy jackets drawn about our shoulders, we now passed the Tomahawk from one to the other, till slowly there grew over us a blue hanging tester[2] of smoke, illuminated by the flame of the new-lit lamp.

Whether it was that this undulating tester rolled the savage away to far distant scenes, I know not, but he now spoke of his native island; and, eager to hear his history, I begged him to go on and tell it. He gladly complied. Though at the time I but ill comprehended not a few of his words, yet subsequent disclosures, when I had become more familiar with his broken phraseology, now enable me to present the whole story such as it may prove in the mere skeleton I give.

CHAPTER 12

BIOGRAPHICAL

Queequeg was a native of Kokovoko, an island far away to the West and South. It is not down in any map; true places never are.[1]

While yet a new-hatched savage running wild about his native woodlands in a grass clout, followed by the nibbling goats, as if he were a green sapling; even then, in Queequeg's ambitious soul, lurked a strong desire to

2. Canopy, like the drapery over a four-poster bed.
1. A true place imagined by Melville.

see something more of Christendom than a specimen whaler or two. His father was a High Chief, a King; his uncle a High Priest; and on the maternal side he boasted aunts who were the wives of unconquerable warriors. There was excellent blood in his veins—royal stuff; though sadly vitiated, I fear, by the cannibal propensity he nourished in his untutored youth.

A Sag Harbor[2] ship visited his father's bay, and Queequeg sought a passage to Christian lands. But the ship, having her full complement of seamen, spurned his suit; and not all the King his father's influence could prevail. But Queequeg vowed a vow. Alone in his canoe, he paddled off to a distant strait, which he knew the ship must pass through when she quitted the island. On one side was a coral reef; on the other a low tongue of land, covered with mangrove thickets that grew out into the water. Hiding his canoe, still afloat, among these thickets, with its prow seaward, he sat down in the stern, paddle low in hand; and when the ship was gliding by, like a flash he darted out; gained her side; with one backward dash of his foot capsized and sank his canoe; climbed up the chains; and throwing himself at full length upon the deck, grappled a ring-bolt there, and swore not to let it go, though hacked in pieces.

In vain the captain threatened to throw him overboard; suspended a cutlass over his naked wrists; Queequeg was the son of a King, and Queequeg budged not. Struck by his desperate dauntlessness, and his wild desire to visit Christendom, the captain at last relented, and told him he might make himself at home.[3] But this fine young savage—this sea Prince of Wales,[4] never saw the captain's cabin. They put him down among the sailors, and made a whaleman of him. But like Czar Peter[5] content to toil in the shipyards of foreign cities, Queequeg disdained no seeming ignominy, if thereby he might haply gain the power of enlightening his untutored countrymen. For at bottom—so he told me—he was actuated by a profound desire to learn among the Christians, the arts whereby to make his people still happier than they were; and more than that, still better than they were. But, alas! the practices of whalemen soon convinced him that even Christians could be both miserable and wicked; infinitely more so, than all his father's heathens. Arrived at last in old Sag Harbor; and seeing what the sailors did there; and then going on to Nantucket, and seeing how they spent their wages in *that* place also, poor Queequeg gave it up for lost. Thought he, it's a wicked world in all meridians; I'll die a pagan.

And thus an old idolator at heart, he yet lived among these Christians, wore their clothes, and tried to talk their gibberish. Hence the queer ways about him, though now some time from home.

By hints, I asked him whether he did not propose going back, and having a coronation; since he might now consider his father dead and gone,

2. On Long Island, a major whaling port. In June 1839, Melville considered going there to sign on a whaleship, but signed instead on a merchant ship bound for Liverpool.
3. As Geoffrey Sanborn discovered (see pp. 542 and 620), Melville based Queequeg on an account in George Lillie Craik's *The New Zealanders* (1830) of an elaborately tattooed Maori chief named Tupai Cupa, who was so determined to go to Europe and "see King Georgy" (p. 318) that he boarded the merchant-ship *Urania* in Cook's Stait, which "divides the two islands that constitute New Zealand," and refused to leave, even when the sailors tried to throw him overboard. Tupai Cupa "perceived what was intended; and instantly throwing himself down on the deck, seized two ring-bolts with so powerful a hold that it was impossible to tear him away without such violence as the humanity of Captain Reynolds would not permit."
4. The English king's or queen's son and successor.
5. Peter the Great of Russia (1672–1725) worked incognito in the British Royal Navy's dockyard near London to learn shipbuilding.

he being very old and feeble at the last accounts. He answered no, not yet; and added that he was fearful Christianity, or rather Christians, had unfitted him for ascending the pure and undefiled throne of thirty pagan Kings before him. But by and by, he said, he would return,—as soon as he felt himself baptized again. For the nonce, however, he proposed to sail about, and sow his wild oats[6] in all four oceans. They had made a harpooner of him, and that barbed iron was in lieu of a scepter now.

I asked him what might be his immediate purpose, touching his future movements. He answered, to go to sea again, in his old vocation. Upon this, I told him that whaling was my own design, and informed him of my intention to sail out of Nantucket, as being the most promising port for an adventurous whaleman to embark from. He at once resolved to accompany me to that island, ship aboard the same vessel, get into the same watch, the same boat, the same mess with me, in short to share my every hap; with both my hands in his, boldly dip into the Potluck of both worlds. To all this I joyously assented; for besides the affection I now felt for Queequeg, he was an experienced harpooneer, and as such, could not fail to be of great usefulness to one, who, like me, was wholly ignorant of the mysteries of whaling, though well acquainted with the sea, as known to merchant seamen.

His story being ended with his pipe's last dying puff, Queequeg embraced me, pressed his forehead against mine, and blowing out the light, we rolled over from each other, this way and that, and very soon were sleeping.

CHAPTER 13

WHEELBARROW

Next morning, Monday, after disposing of the embalmed head to a barber, for a block,[1] I settled my own and comrade's bill; using, however, my comrade's money. The grinning landlord, as well as the boarders, seemed amazingly tickled at the sudden friendship which had sprung up between me and Queequeg—especially as Peter Coffin's cock and bull stories[2] about him had previously so much alarmed me concerning the very person whom I now companied with.

We borrowed a wheelbarrow, and embarking our things, including my own poor carpet-bag, and Queequeg's canvas sack and hammock, away we went down to "the Moss," the little Nantucket packet schooner moored at the wharf. As we were going along the people stared; not at Queequeg so much—for they were used to seeing cannibals like him in their streets,—but at seeing him and me upon such confidential terms. But we heeded them not, going along wheeling the barrow by turns, and Queequeg now and then stopping to adjust the sheath on his harpoon barbs. I asked him why he carried such a troublesome thing with him ashore, and whether all whaling ships did not find[3] their own harpoons. To this, in substance, he replied, that though what I hinted was true enough, yet he had a particular affection for his own harpoon, because it was of assured stuff, well

6. Proverbial for committing youthful, specifically sexual, indiscretions, the inappropriate casting of seed (semen) being condemned in the Bible, particularly in the early books of the Old Testament.
1. Form, for keeping a wig in shape.
2. Fantastic stories told as if true.
3. Supply, furnish.

tried in many a mortal combat, and deeply intimate with the hearts of whales. In short, like many inland reapers and mowers, who go into the farmers' meadows armed with their own scythes—though in no wise obliged to furnish them—even so, Queequeg, for his own private reasons, preferred his own harpoon.

Shifting the barrow from my hands to his, he told me a funny story about the first wheelbarrow he had ever seen. It was in Sag Harbor. The owners of his ship, it seems, had lent him one, in which to carry his heavy chest to his boarding house. Not to seem ignorant about the thing—though in truth he was entirely so, concerning the precise way in which to manage the barrow—Queequeg puts his chest upon it; lashes it fast; and then shoulders the barrow and marches up the wharf. "Why," said I, "Queequeg, you might have known better than that, one would think. Didn't the people laugh?"

Upon this, he told me another story. The people of his island of Kokovoko, it seems, at their wedding feasts express the fragrant water of young cocoanuts into a large stained calabash[4] like a punchbowl; and this punchbowl always forms the great central ornament on the braided mat where the feast is held. Now a certain grand merchant ship once touched at Kokovoko, and its commander—from all accounts, a very stately punctilious gentleman, at least for a sea captain—this commander was invited to the wedding feast of Queequeg's sister, a pretty young princess just turned of ten. Well; when all the wedding guests were assembled at the bride's bamboo cottage, this Captain marches in, and being assigned the post of honor, placed himself over against the punchbowl, and between the High Priest and his majesty the King, Queequeg's father. Grace being said,—for those people have their grace as well as we—though Queequeg told me that unlike us, who at such times look downwards to our platters, they, on the contrary, copying the ducks, glance upwards to the great Giver of all feasts—Grace, I say, being said, the High Priest opens the banquet by the immemorial ceremony of the island; that is, dipping his consecrated and consecrating fingers into the bowl before the blessed beverage circulates. Seeing himself placed next the Priest, and noting the ceremony, and thinking himself—being Captain of a ship—as having plain precedence over a mere island King, especially in the King's own house—the Captain coolly proceeds to wash his hands in the punch bowl;—taking it I suppose for a huge finger-glass.[5] "Now," said Queequeg, "what you tink now?—Didn't our people laugh?"

At last, passage paid, and luggage safe, we stood on board the schooner. Hoisting sail, it glided down the Acushnet river.[6] On one side, New Bedford rose in terraces of streets, their ice-covered trees all glittering in the clear, cold air. Huge hills and mountains of casks on casks were piled upon her wharves, and side by side the world-wandering whale ships lay silent and safely moored at last; while from others came a sound of carpenters and coopers, with blended noises of fires and forges to melt the pitch, all betokening that new cruises were on the start; that one most perilous and long voyage ended, only begins a second; and a second ended,

4. Gourd.
5. Or finger bowl, set at each place at a formal dinner table for delicately dipping the tips of messy fingers.
6. River flowing between New Bedford and the less-famous Fairhaven (the port from which Melville himself sailed on the *Acushnet* on January 3, 1841).

only begins a third, and so on, for ever and for aye. Such is the endlessness, yea, the intolerableness of all earthly effort.

Gaining the more open water, the bracing breeze waxed fresh; the little Moss tossed the quick foam from her bows, as a young colt his snortings. How I snuffed that Tartar[7] air!—how I spurned that turnpike earth!—that common highway all over dented with the marks of slavish heels and hoofs; and turned me to admire the magnanimity of the sea which will permit no records.

At the same foam-fountain, Queequeg seemed to drink and reel with me. His dusky nostrils swelled apart; he showed his filed and pointed teeth. On, on we flew; and our offing gained, the Moss did homage to the blast; ducked and dived her bows as a slave before the Sultan. Sideways leaning, we sideways darted; every ropeyarn tingling like a wire; the two tall masts buckling like Indian canes in land tornadoes. So full of this reeling scene were we, as we stood by the plunging bowsprit, that for some time we did not notice the jeering glances of the passengers, a lubber-like[8] assembly, who marvelled that two fellow beings should be so companionable; as though a white man were anything more dignified than a white-washed negro. But there were some boobies and bumpkins there, who, by their intense greenness, must have come from the heart and centre of all verdure. Queequeg caught one of these young saplings mimicking him behind his back. I thought the bumpkin's hour of doom was come. Dropping his harpoon, the brawny savage caught him in his arms, and by an almost miraculous dexterity and strength, sent him high up bodily into the air; then slightly tapping his stern in mid-somerset, the fellow landed with bursting lungs upon his feet, while Queequeg, turning his back upon him, lighted his tomahawk pipe and passed it to me for a puff.[9]

"Capting! Capting!" yelled the bumpkin, running towards that officer; "Capting, Capting, here's the devil."

"Hallo, *you* sir," cried the Captain, a gaunt rib of the sea, stalking up to Queequeg, "what in thunder do you mean by that? Don't you know you might have killed that chap?"

"What him say?" said Queequeg, as he mildly turned to me.

"He say," said I, "that you came near kill-e that man there," pointing to the still shivering greenhorn.

"Kill-e," cried Queequeg, twisting his tattooed face into an unearthly expression of disdain, "ah! him bery small-e fish-e; Queequeg no kill-e so small-e fish-e; Queequeg kill-e big whale!"

"Look you," roared the Captain, "I'll kill-e *you*, you cannibal, if you try any more of your tricks aboard here; so mind your eye."

But it so happened just then, that it was high time for the Captain to mind his own eye. The prodigious strain upon the main-sail had parted

7. Wild, barbaric, like the medieval Tartar hordes who invaded the broad area in Asia and eastern Europe once called Tartary.
8. Like a clumsy landsman.
9. Melville alters his source, *The New Zealanders*, Sanborn found, to suppress a rare display of rage by Tupai Cupa and replace it with Queequeg's display of power controlled by good humor: "In his general demeanour he was very gentle and tractable, but would at times shew a good deal both of the fickleness and the sudden irritability of the savage. On one occasion, when on board the ship, a stout sailor had intentionally affronted him; on which he rushed upon the man, seized him by the neck and the waistband of the trowsers, and after holding him for some moments above his head, dashed him on the deck with great violence" (p. 322).

the weather-sheet,[1] and the tremendous boom was now flying from side to side, completely sweeping the entire after part of the deck. The poor fellow whom Queequeg had handled so roughly, was swept overboard; all hands were in a panic; and to attempt snatching at the boom to stay it, seemed madness. It flew from right to left, and back again, almost in one ticking of a watch, and every instant seemed on the point of snapping into splinters. Nothing was done, and nothing seemed capable of being done; those on deck rushed towards the bows, and stood eyeing the boom as if it were the lower jaw of an exasperated whale. In the midst of this consternation, Queequeg dropped deftly to his knees, and crawling under the path of the boom, whipped hold of a rope, secured one end to the bulwarks, and then flinging the other like a lasso, caught it round the boom as it swept over his head, and at the next jerk, the spar was that way trapped, and all was safe. The schooner was run into the wind, and while the hands were clearing away the stern boat, Queequeg, stripped to the waist, darted from the side with a long living arc of a leap. For three minutes or more he was seen swimming like a dog, throwing his long arms straight out before him, and by turns revealing his brawny shoulders through the freezing foam. I looked at the grand and glorious fellow, but saw no one to be saved. The greenhorn had gone down. Shooting himself perpendicularly from the water, Queequeg now took an instant's glance around him, and seeming to see just how matters were, dived down and disappeared. A few minutes more, and he rose again, one arm still striking out, and with the other dragging a lifeless form. The boat soon picked them up.[2] The poor bumpkin was restored. All hands voted Queequeg a noble trump; the captain begged his pardon. From that hour I clove to Queequeg like a barnacle; yea, till poor Queequeg took his last long dive.

Was there ever such unconsciousness?[3] He did not seem to think that he at all deserved a medal from the Humane and Magnanimous Societies.[4] He only asked for water—fresh water—something to wipe the brine off; that done, he put on dry clothes, lighted his pipe, and leaning against the bulwarks, and mildly eyeing those around him, seemed to be saying to himself—"It's a mutual, joint-stock world,[5] in all meridians. We cannibals must help these Christians."

CHAPTER 14

NANTUCKET[1]

Nothing more happened on the passage worthy the mentioning; so, after a fine run, we safely arrived in Nantucket.

1. Rope holding the sails against the force of the wind.
2. Sanborn points out a description of the incident that "knit Tupai and Captain Reynolds in indissoluble friendship": "The Captain fell overboard, and would have perished but for the intrepidity of Tupai, who plunged after him into the water, and having caught hold of him as he was sinking, supported him with the one hand, while he swam with the other, till they were both again taken on board" (p. 320).
3. Lack of self-consciousness.
4. Part of Melville's recurrent jocular references to real or imagined do-good causes and organizations.
5. I.e., like a company whose stockholders share in its responsibilities and profits.

1. Vincent (1949, pp. 81–87) identifies Melville's major sources for this chapter, notably Macy (1835) and Hart (1834); see the Bibliography and Melville's Reading. Melville visited Nantucket only in 1852, the year after *Moby-Dick* was published.

Nantucket! Take out your map and look at it. See what a real corner of the world it occupies; how it stands there, away off shore, more lonely than the Eddystone lighthouse.[2] Look at it—a mere hillock, and elbow of sand; all beach, without a background. There is more sand there than you would use in twenty years as a substitute for blotting paper. Some gamesome wights will tell you that they have to plant weeds there, they don't grow naturally; that they import Canada thistles; that they have to send beyond seas for a spile[3] to stop a leak in an oil cask; that pieces of wood in Nantucket are carried about like bits of the true cross in Rome; that people there plant toadstools before their houses, to get under the shade in summer time; that one blade of grass makes an oasis, three blades in a day's walk a prairie; that they wear quicksand shoes, something like Laplander snow-shoes; that they are so shut up, belted about, every way inclosed, surrounded, and made an utter island of by the ocean, that to their very chairs and tables small clams will sometimes be found adhering, as to the backs of sea turtles. But these extravaganzas only show that Nantucket is no Illinois.

Look now at the wondrous traditional story of how this island was settled by the red-men.[4] Thus goes the legend. In olden times an eagle swooped down upon the New England coast, and carried off an infant Indian in his talons. With loud lament the parents saw their child borne out of sight over the wide waters. They resolved to follow in the same direction. Setting out in their canoes, after a perilous passage they discovered the island, and there they found an empty ivory casket,—the poor little Indian's skeleton.

What wonder, then, that these Nantucketers, born on a beach, should take to the sea for a livelihood! They first caught crabs and quohogs[5] in the sand; grown bolder, they waded out with nets for mackerel; more experienced, they pushed off in boats and captured cod; and at last, launching a navy of great ships on the sea, explored this watery world; put an incessant belt of circumnavigations round it; peeped in at Bhering's Straits;[6] and in all seasons and all oceans declared everlasting war with the mightiest animated mass that has survived the flood;[7] most monstrous and most mountainous! That Himmalehan, salt-sea Mastodon, clothed with such portentousness of unconscious power, that his very panics are more to be dreaded than his most fearless and malicious assaults!

And thus have these naked Nantucketers, these sea hermits, issuing from their ant-hill in the sea, overrun and conquered the watery world like so many Alexanders; parcelling out among them the Atlantic, Pacific, and Indian oceans, as the three pirate powers[8] did Poland. Let America add Mexico to Texas, and pile Cuba upon Canada; let the English overswarm all India, and hang out their blazing banner from the sun; two thirds of

2. In the English Channel.
3. A wooden plug.
4. Melville could have found this in *Collections of the Massachusetts Historical Society*, 2nd series, 3 (1815), p. 34, or another source.
5. Algonquian name for a native clam.
6. Or Bering Strait, between Asia and North America (Alaska).
7. In Genesis 6–8, thought by some to have killed off prehistoric land mammals (although Noah was said to have taken all species on board the ark). In this extravagant passage, genuinely prehistoric extinct animals are not distinguished from those now known to have become extinct only recently, such as the mastodons, still occasionally found preserved in ice.
8. Russia, Austria, and Prussia.

this terraqueous globe are the Nantucketer's.[9] For the sea is his; he owns it, as Emperors own empires; other seamen having but a right of way through it. Merchant ships are but extension bridges; armed ones but floating forts; even pirates and privateers, though following the sea as highwaymen[1] the road, they but plunder other ships, other fragments of the land like themselves, without seeking to draw their living from the bottomless deep itself. The Nantucketer, he alone resides and riots[2] on the sea; he alone, in Bible language, goes down to it in ships;[3] to and fro ploughing it as his own special plantation. *There* is his home; *there* lies his business, which a Noah's flood would not interrupt, though it overwhelmed all the millions in China. He lives on the sea, as prairie cocks in the prairie; he hides among the waves, he climbs them as chamois hunters climb the Alps. For years he knows not the land; so that when he comes to it at last, it smells like another world, more strangely than the moon would to an Earthsman. With the landless gull, that at sunset folds her wings and is rocked to sleep between billows; so at nightfall, the Nantucketer, out of sight of land, furls his sails, and lays him to his rest, while under his very pillow rush herds of walruses and whales.

CHAPTER 15

CHOWDER

It was quite late in the evening when the little Moss came snugly to anchor, and Queequeg and I went ashore; so we could attend to no business that day, at least none but a supper and a bed. The landlord of the Spouter-Inn had recommended us to his cousin Hosea Hussey of the Try Pots,[1] whom he asserted to be the proprietor of one of the best kept hotels in all Nantucket, and moreover he had assured us that cousin Hosea, as he called him, was famous for his chowders. In short, he plainly hinted that we could not possibly do better than try pot-luck at the Try Pots. But the directions he had given us about keeping a yellow warehouse on our starboard hand till we opened[2] a white church to the larboard,[3] and then keeping that on the larboard hand till we made a corner three points[4] to the starboard, and that done, then ask the first man we met where the place was: these crooked directions of his very much puzzled us at first, especially as, at the outset, Queequeg insisted that the yellow warehouse—our first point

9. In this extravagance, Nantucketers, conquerors of two-thirds of the watery world, are declared greater than Alexander the Great of Macedonia (356–323 B.C.E.); greater than the countries that divided up Poland in the late 18th century; greater than the United States, which had annexed Texas in 1845 and the southwest (New Mexico, Arizona, and California) in 1848 and seemed set to gobble up Mexico, Cuba, and Canada; and greater than the British Empire, which had already taken over most of India.

1. Robbers (also called footpads) who prey on travelers along roads, familiar from Shakespeare's *1 Henry IV* 2.2 and 2.4.
2. Emended to "resides and rests" in NN, but "resides and riots" as a catchphrase is attested in J. W. Stapleton's *The Great Crime of 1860* (London, 1861): "the Angel of Death comes often to reside and riot in those chambers."
3. Psalm 107.23–24: "They that go down to the sea in ships, that do business in great waters; these see the works of the Lord, and his wonders in the deep."

1. Named for the huge vats on the decks of whale ships in which whale blubber is tried out (fried) to extract the oil.
2. Sighted. "Starboard": right.
3. Left.
4. A point is 11¼ degrees of the 360 degrees of a compass card.

of departure—must be left on the larboard hand, whereas I had understood Peter Coffin to say it was on the starboard. However, by dint of beating about a little in the dark, and now and then knocking up a peaceable[5] inhabitant to inquire the way, we at last came to something which there was no mistaking.

Two enormous wooden pots painted black, and suspended by asses' ears, swung from the cross-trees[6] of an old top-mast, planted in front of an old doorway. The horns of the cross-trees were sawed off on the other side, so that this old top-mast looked not a little like a gallows. Perhaps I was over sensitive to such impressions at the time, but I could not help staring at this gallows with a vague misgiving. A sort of crick was in my neck as I gazed up to the two remaining horns; yes, *two* of them, one for Queequeg, and one for me. It's ominous, thinks I. A Coffin my Innkeeper upon landing in my first whaling port; tombstones staring at me in the whalemen's chapel; and here a gallows! and a pair of prodigious black pots too! Are these last throwing out oblique hints touching Tophet?

I was called from these reflections by the sight of a freckled woman with yellow hair and a yellow gown, standing in the porch of the inn, under a dull red lamp swinging there, that looked much like an injured eye, and carrying on a brisk scolding with a man in a purple woollen shirt.

"Get along with ye," said she to the man, "or I'll be combing ye!"

"Come on, Queequeg," said I, "all right. There's Mrs. Hussey."[7]

And so it turned out; Mr. Hosea Hussey being from home, but leaving Mrs. Hussey entirely competent to attend to all his affairs. Upon making known our desires for a supper and a bed, Mrs. Hussey, postponing further scolding for the present, ushered us into a little room, and seating us at a table spread with the relics of a recently concluded repast, turned round to us and said—"Clam or Cod?"

"What's that about Cods, ma'am?" said I, with much politeness.

"Clam or Cod?" she repeated.

"A clam for supper? a cold clam; is *that* what you mean, Mrs. Hussey?" says I; "but that's a rather cold and clammy reception in the winter time, ain't it, Mrs. Hussey?"

But being in a great hurry to resume scolding the man in the purple shirt, who was waiting for it in the entry, and seeming to hear nothing but the word "clam," Mrs. Hussey hurried towards an open door leading to the kitchen, and bawling out "clam for two," disappeared.

"Queequeg," said I, "do you think that we can make out a supper for us both on one clam?"

However, a warm savory steam from the kitchen served to belie the apparently cheerless prospect before us. But when that smoking chowder came in, the mystery was delightfully explained. Oh, sweet friends! hearken to me. It was made of small juicy clams, scarcely bigger than hazel nuts, mixed with pounded ship biscuit,[8] and salted pork cut up into little flakes; the whole enriched with butter, and plentifully seasoned with pepper and salt. Our appetites being sharpened by the frosty voyage, and in particular,

5. Perhaps not just law-abiding but specifically Quaker. "Knocking up": waking up, by knocking on the door.
6. Horizontal timbers set crosswise to a mast. "Asses' ears": ear-shaped handles from which pots hang.
7. A common New England name, but a "hussy" is a brazen lower-class woman.
8. Made of flour and water without salt and baked very hard; standard shipboard fare.

Queequeg seeing his favorite fishy food before him, and the chowder being surpassingly excellent, we dispatched it with great expedition: when leaning back a moment and bethinking me of Mrs. Hussey's clam and cod announcement, I thought I would try a little experiment. Stepping to the kitchen door, I uttered the word "cod" with great emphasis, and resumed my seat. In a few moments the savory steam came forth again, but with a different flavor, and in good time a fine cod-chowder was placed before us.

We resumed business; and while plying our spoons in the bowl, thinks I to myself, I wonder now if this here has any effect on the head? What's that stultifying saying about chowder-headed people?[9] "But look, Queequeg, ain't that a live eel in your bowl? Where's your harpoon?"

Fishiest of all fishy places was the Try Pots, which well deserved its name; for the pots there were always boiling chowders. Chowder for breakfast, and chowder for dinner, and chowder for supper, till you began to look for fish-bones coming through your clothes. The area before the house was paved with clam-shells. Mrs. Hussey wore a polished necklace of cod-fish vertebra; and Hosea Hussey had his account books bound in superior old shark-skin. There was a fishy flavor to the milk, too, which I could not at all account for, till one morning happening to take a stroll along the beach among some fishermen's boats, I saw Hosea's brindled cow feeding on fish remnants, and marching along the sand with each foot in a cod's decapitated head, looking very slip-shod,[1] I assure ye.

Supper concluded, we received a lamp, and directions from Mrs. Hussey concerning the nearest way to bed; but, as Queequeg was about to precede me up the stairs, the lady reached forth her arm, and demanded his harpoon; she allowed no harpoon in her chambers. "Why not?" said I; "every true whaleman sleeps with his harpoon—but why not?" "Because it's dangerous," says she. "Ever since young Stiggs coming from that unfort'nt v'y'ge of his, when he was gone four years and a half, with ony three barrels of *ile*, was found dead in my first floor back, with his harpoon in his side; ever since then I allow no boarders to take sich dangerous weepons in their rooms a-night. So, Mr. Queequeg" (for she had learned his name), "I will just take this here iron, and keep it for you till morning. But the chowder; clam or cod to-morrow for breakfast, men?"

"Both," says I; "and let's have a couple of smoked herring by way of variety."

CHAPTER 16

THE SHIP

In bed we concocted our plans for the morrow. But to my surprise and no small concern, Queequeg now gave me to understand, that he had been diligently consulting Yojo—the name of his black little god—and Yojo had told him two or three times over, and strongly insisted upon it everyway, that instead of our going together among the whaling-fleet in harbor, and

9. Those with mixed-up or downright stupid minds, but Ishmael intends no disrespect toward chowder.
1. Wearing loose slippers and therefore looking slovenly, as the cow looked with all four feet each in a cut-off cod's head.

in concert selecting our craft; instead of this, I say, Yojo earnestly enjoined that the selection of the ship should rest wholly with me, inasmuch as Yojo purposed befriending us; and, in order to do so, had already pitched upon a vessel, which, if left to myself, I, Ishmael, should infallibly light upon, for all the world as though it had turned out by chance; and in that vessel I must immediately ship myself, for the present irrespective of Queequeg.

I have forgotten to mention that, in many things, Queequeg placed great confidence in the excellence of Yojo's judgment and surprising forecast of things; and cherished Yojo with considerable esteem, as a rather good sort of god, who perhaps meant well enough upon the whole, but in all cases did not succeed in his benevolent designs.

Now, this plan of Queequeg's, or rather Yojo's, touching the selection of our craft; I did not like that plan at all. I had not a little relied upon Queequeg's sagacity to point out the whaler best fitted to carry us and our fortunes securely. But as all my remonstrances produced no effect upon Queequeg, I was obliged to acquiesce; and accordingly prepared to set about this business with a determined rushing sort of energy and vigor, that should quickly settle that trifling little affair. Next morning early, leaving Queequeg shut up with Yojo in our little bedroom—for it seemed that it was some sort of Lent or Ramadan,[1] or day of fasting, humiliation, and prayer with Queequeg and Yojo that day; *how* it was I never could find out, for, though I applied myself to it several times, I never could master his liturgies and XXXIX Articles[2]—leaving Queequeg, then, fasting on his tomahawk pipe, and Yojo warming himself at his sacrificial fire of shavings, I sallied out among the shipping. After much prolonged sauntering and many random inquiries, I learnt that there were three ships up for three-years' voyages—The Devil-dam, the Tit-bit,[3] and the Pequod. *Devil-Dam*, I do not know the origin of; *Tit-bit* is obvious; *Pequod*, you will no doubt remember, was the name of a celebrated tribe of Massachusetts Indians, now extinct[4] as the ancient Medes. I peered and pryed about the Devil-Dam; from her, hopped over to the Tit-bit; and, finally, going on board the Pequod, looked around her for a moment, and then decided that this was the very ship for us.

You may have seen many a quaint craft in your day, for aught I know;—square-toed luggers; mountainous Japanese junks; butter-box galliots,[5] and what not; but take my word for it, you never saw such a rare old craft as this same rare old Pequod. She was a ship of the old school, rather small if anything; with an old fashioned claw-footed[6] look about her. Long seasoned and weather-stained in the typhoons and calms of all four oceans, her old hull's complexion was darkened like a French grenadier's,[7] who has alike fought in Egypt and Siberia. Her venerable bows looked bearded. Her

1. The Islamic period, lasting the whole ninth month of the lunar calendar, which means that Ramadan can occur in any season. Some Christian sects observe Lent, a period (often forty days) before Easter, as a time of prayer and dietary strictness, if not actual fasting (the Episcopalians in Melville's own family were more observant of Lent than the Dutch Reformed were).
2. The official creed of the Church of England since 1563.
3. A choice morsel of food; here, slightly vulgar because it comes right after "the Devil-dam" (mother of the devil).
4. The Pequots were not extinct, but had been nearly annihilated in 1637. In his youth, Melville read of the war against these Indians in Benjamin Trumbull's *A Complete History of Connecticut*.
5. Usually sleek, long boats, but here (as in Melville's footnote in Ch. 61) boxy and clumsy. "Luggers": small vessels with a lugsail (square sail). "Junks": Asian high-topped ships.
6. Like heavy 18th-century furniture with feet carved to look like lions' feet, especially.
7. Foot-soldiers armed with grenades; here, veterans of Napoleon's campaigns in Egypt and Russia (though not as far as Siberia).

masts—cut somewhere on the coast of Japan, where her original ones were lost overboard in a gale—her masts stood stiffly up like the spines of the three old kings of Cologne.[8] Her ancient decks were worn and wrinkled, like the pilgrim-worshipped flag-stone in Canterbury Cathedral where Beckett bled.[9] But to all these her old antiquities, were added new and marvellous features, pertaining to the wild business that for more than half a century she had followed. Old Captain Peleg, many years her chief-mate, before he commanded another vessel of his own, and now a retired seaman, and one of the principal owners of the Pequod,—this old Peleg, during the term of his chief-mateship, had built upon her original grotesqueness, and inlaid it, all over, with a quaintness both of material and device, unmatched by anything except it be Thorkill-Hake's carved buckler or bedstead.[1] She was appareled like any barbaric Ethiopian emperor, his neck heavy with pendants of polished ivory. She was a thing of trophies. A cannibal of a craft, tricking herself forth in the chased bones of her enemies. All round, her unpanelled, open bulwarks[2] were garnished like one continuous jaw, with the long sharp teeth of the sperm whale, inserted there for pins, to fasten her old hempen thews and tendons[3] to. Those thews ran not through base blocks[4] of land wood, but deftly travelled over sheaves of sea-ivory. Scorning a turnstile wheel at her reverend helm, she sported there a tiller; and that tiller was in one mass, curiously carved from the long narrow lower jaw of her hereditary foe.[5] The helmsman who steered by that tiller in a tempest, felt like the Tartar,[6] when he holds back his fiery steed by clutching its jaw. A noble craft, but somehow a most melancholy! All noble things are touched with that.

Now when I looked about the quarter-deck, for some one having authority, in order to propose myself as a candidate for the voyage, at first I saw nobody; but I could not well overlook a strange sort of tent, or rather wigwam, pitched a little behind the main-mast. It seemed only a temporary erection used in port. It was of a conical shape, some ten feet high; consisting of the long, huge slabs of limber black bone taken from the middle and highest part of the jaws of the right-whale. Planted with their broad ends on the deck, a circle of these slabs laced together, mutually sloped towards each other, and at the apex united in a tufted point, where the loose hairy fibres waved to and fro like the top-knot on some old Pottowottamie Sachem's head.[7] A triangular opening faced towards the bows of the ship, so that the insider commanded a complete view forward.

8. Late in 1849, on a brief visit to Germany, Melville glimpsed, in the great unfinished cathedral in Cologne, three skulls displayed as being those of the wise men who followed a star to Bethlehem and gave gifts to the infant Jesus.
9. Landing at Deal (on the English Channel) in November 1849, Melville walked much of the way to Canterbury, where he toured the cathedral and scrutinized the "ugly place" where four knights of Henry II assassinated Thomas Becket, the archbishop of Canterbury, in 1170.
1. Melville had picked up information about the Icelandic warrior who had his mighty deeds carved on his bed and other furniture.
2. Here, the *Pequod* has open bulwarks, unpaneled walls around the upper deck, but in Ch. 51 she has solid ones the crew take refuge behind.
3. Muscles and cords of a living thing (metaphorical). "Pins": belaying pins (clublike fastening pegs).
4. The blocks contain the wheels ("sheaves") of pulleys through which ropes run.
5. For steering, here the *Pequod* has a whalebone tiller (one long lever) but later a turnstile wheel (see Chs. 61, 118).
6. Mongolian horsemen who in the 13th century under Genghis Khan overran much of central and western Asia and eastern Europe; see also p. 58, n. 7.
7. Any Algonquian chief of a New York (later Kansas) tribe; their topknots were scalp locks interwoven with feathers.

And half concealed in this queer tenement, I at length found one who by his aspect seemed to have authority; and who, it being noon, and the ship's work suspended, was now enjoying respite from the burden of command. He was seated on an old-fashioned oaken chair, wriggling all over with curious carving; and the bottom of which was formed of a stout interlacing of the same elastic stuff of which the wigwam was constructed.

There was nothing so very particular, perhaps, about the appearance of the elderly man I saw; he was brown and brawny, like most old seamen, and heavily rolled up in blue pilot-cloth,[8] cut in the Quaker style; only there was a fine and almost microscopic net-work of the minutest wrinkles interlacing round his eyes, which must have arisen from his continual sailings in many hard gales, and always looking to windward;—for this causes the muscles about the eyes to become pursed together. Such eye-wrinkles are very effectual in a scowl.

"Is this the Captain of the Pequod?" said I, advancing to the door of the tent.

"Supposing it be the Captain of the Pequod, what dost thou want of him?" he demanded.

"I was thinking of shipping."

"Thou wast, wast thou?[9] I see thou art no Nantucketer—ever been in a stove boat?"

"No, Sir, I never have."

"Dost know nothing at all about whaling, I dare say—eh?"

"Nothing, Sir; but I have no doubt I shall soon learn. I've been several voyages in the merchant service, and I think that——"

"Marchant service be damned. Talk not that lingo to me. Dost see that leg?—I'll take that leg away from thy stern, if ever thou talkest of the marchant service to me again. Marchant service indeed! I suppose now ye feel considerable proud of having served in those marchant ships. But flukes! man, what makes thee want to go a whaling, eh?—it looks a little suspicious, don't it, eh?—Hast not been a pirate, hast thou?—Didst not rob thy last Captain, didst thou?—Dost not think of murdering the officers when thou gettest to sea?"

I protested my innocence of these things. I saw that under the mask of these half humorous inuendoes, this old seaman, as an insulated Quakerish Nantucketer, was full of his insular prejudices, and rather distrustful of all aliens, unless they hailed from Cape Cod or the Vineyard.[1]

"But what takes thee a-whaling? I want to know that before I think of shipping ye."

"Well, sir, I want to see what whaling is. I want to see the world."

"Want to see what whaling is, eh? Have ye clapped eye on Captain Ahab?"[2]

8. A long overcoat of plain, square cut, this one made of the indigo blue woolen cloth commonly used for mariners' garments.
9. The dialect is explained later in this chapter as part of "the stately dramatic *thee* and *thou* of the Quaker idiom," learned in childhood. Melville and his Ishmael (the self-defined "tragic dramatist," in Ch. 33) associate it with the King James Version of the Bible and church services (hence "stately") and with Shakespeare's tragedies (hence "dramatic").
1. Mainland Cape Cod is some thirty miles north of Nantucket Island. The neighboring island of Martha's Vineyard is a little to the west of Nantucket. New Bedford, on the mainland, is a few miles farther northwest. All are in Massachusetts; see map on p. xviii.
2. The name Ahab is ominous because 1 Kings 16.28–22.40 traces the wicked reign of the idolatrous King Ahab and his wife, Jezebel.

"Who is Captain Ahab, sir?"

"Aye, aye, I thought so. Captain Ahab is the Captain of this ship."

"I am mistaken then. I thought I was speaking to the Captain himself."

"Thou art speaking to Captain Peleg—that's who ye are speaking to, young man. It belongs to me and Captain Bildad to see the Pequod fitted out for the voyage, and supplied with all her needs, including crew. We are part owners and agents. But as I was going to say, if thou wantest to know what whaling is, as thou tellest ye do, I can put ye in a way of finding it out before ye bind yourself to it, past backing out. Clap eye on Captain Ahab, young man, and thou wilt find that he has only one leg."

"What do you mean, sir? Was the other one lost by a whale?"

"Lost by a whale! Young man, come nearer to me: it was devoured, chewed up, crunched by the monstrousest parmacetty that ever chipped a boat!—ah, ah!"

I was a little alarmed by his energy, perhaps also a little touched at the hearty grief in his concluding exclamation, but said as calmly as I could, "What you say is no doubt true enough, sir; but how could I know there was any peculiar ferocity in that particular whale, though indeed I might have inferred as much from the simple fact of the accident."

"Look ye now, young man, thy lungs are a sort of soft, d'ye see; thou dost not talk shark[3] a bit. *Sure*, ye've been to sea before now; sure of that?"

"Sir," said I, "I thought I told you that I had been four voyages in the merchant——"

"Hard down out of that! Mind what I said about the marchant service—don't aggravate me—I won't have it. But let us understand each other. I have given thee a hint about what whaling is; do ye yet feel inclined for it?"

"I do, sir."

"Very good. Now, art thou the man to pitch a harpoon down a live whale's throat, and then jump after it? Answer, quick!"

"I am, sir, if it should be positively indispensable to do so; not to be got rid of, that is; which I don't take to be the fact."

"Good again. Now then, thou not only wantest to go a-whaling, to find out by experience what whaling is, but ye also want to go in order to see the world? Was not that what ye said? I thought so. Well then, just step forward there, and take a peep over the weather-bow,[4] and then back to me and tell me what ye see there."

For a moment I stood a little puzzled by this curious request, not knowing exactly how to take it, whether humorously or in earnest. But concentrating all his crow's feet into one scowl, Captain Peleg started me on the errand.

Going forward and glancing over the weather bow, I perceived that the ship swinging to her anchor with the flood-tide, was now obliquely pointing towards the open ocean. The prospect was unlimited, but exceedingly monotonous and forbidding; not the slightest variety that I could see.

"Well, what's the report?" said Peleg when I came back; "what did ye see?"

3. Like the landlord at the Spouter Inn, Peleg calls unfavorable attention to Ishmael's formal (schoolmasterly) diction, here also seeming to mistrust his lung power and general health, although Ishmael later considers himself of a "broad-shouldered make."
4. The fore side onto which the wind is blowing.

"Not much," I replied—"nothing but water; considerable horizon though, and there's a squall coming up, I think."

"Well, what dost thou think then of seeing the world? Do ye wish to go round Cape Horn to see any more of it, eh? Can't ye see the world where you stand?"

I was a little staggered, but go a-whaling I must, and I would; and the Pequod was as good a ship as any—I thought the best—and all this I now repeated to Peleg. Seeing me so determined, he expressed his willingness to ship me.

"And thou mayest as well sign the papers right off," he added—"come along with ye." And so saying, he led the way below deck into the cabin.

Seated on the transom[5] was what seemed to me a most uncommon and surprising figure. It turned out to be Captain Bildad,[6] who along with Captain Peleg was one of the largest owners of the vessel; the other shares, as is sometimes the case in these ports, being held by a crowd of old annuitants;[7] widows, fatherless children, and chancery wards;[8] each owning about the value of a timber head,[9] or a foot of plank, or a nail or two in the ship. People in Nantucket invest their money in whaling vessels, the same way that you do yours in approved state stocks[1] bringing in good interest.

Now, Bildad, like Peleg, and indeed many other Nantucketers, was a Quaker, the island having been originally settled by that sect;[2] and to this day its inhabitants in general retain in an uncommon measure the peculiarities of the Quaker, only variously and anomalously modified by things altogether alien and heterogeneous. For some of these same Quakers are the most sanguinary[3] of all sailors and whale-hunters. They are fighting Quakers; they are Quakers with a vengeance.[4]

So that there are instances among them of men, who, named with Scripture names—a singularly common fashion on the island—and in childhood naturally imbibing the stately dramatic *thee* and *thou* of the Quaker idiom; still, from the audacious, daring, and boundless adventure of their subsequent lives, strangely blend with these unoutgrown peculiarities, a thousand bold dashes of character, not unworthy a Scandinavian sea-king, or a poetical Pagan Roman.[5] And when these things unite in a man of greatly superior natural force, with a globular brain and a ponderous heart; who has also by the stillness and seclusion of many long night-watches in

5. Crossbeam in the stern, used as a seat.
6. The name of one of Job's three friends who came to comfort him (Job 2:11) but remained to challenge and reproach him.
7. Persons living on payments at yearly or other regular intervals.
8. Persons under the guardianship of the courts.
9. The above-deck part of one of the ship's ribs.
1. Shares of stock issued by (and guaranteed by) a state of the union.
2. Quakers (or Friends) were not in fact the original settlers but had become a large part of the population of Nantucket.
3. Bloodthirsty, murderous. The idea of "fighting Quakers" contradicts the basic pacifist tenets of the Society of Friends.
4. A play on the phrase *with a vengeance* (to an extreme degree), the point being that Quakers are expected not to wreak vengeance on others but to turn the other cheek when struck, as Jesus commands (Matthew 5.39): "But I say unto you, That ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also." In early New England, Quakers had been persecuted to the point of death; elsewhere, as in Virginia, married Quakers, even in the 17th century, were fined for fornication because they had not been married by an Anglican minister.
5. Fit to be the hero of a saga about the Vikings or of an epic or drama about ancient Rome. In the paragraph as a whole, Melville suggests some of the influences that might work together to create "a mighty pageant creature," the sort that an American writer of his own time might dare to celebrate as a believable American tragic hero.

the remotest waters, and beneath constellations never seen here at the north, been led to think untraditionally and independently; receiving all nature's sweet or savage impressions fresh from her own virgin, voluntary, and confiding breast, and thereby chiefly, but with some help from accidental advantages, to learn a bold and nervous lofty language—that man makes one in a whole nation's census—a mighty pageant creature, formed for noble tragedies. Nor will it at all detract from him, dramatically regarded, if either by birth or other circumstances, he have what seems a half wilful over-ruling morbidness at the bottom of his nature. For all men tragically great are made so through a certain morbidness. Be sure of this, O young ambition, all mortal greatness is but disease. But, as yet we have not to do with such an one, but with quite another; and still a man, who, if indeed peculiar, it only results again from another phase of the Quaker, modified by individual circumstances.

Like Captain Peleg, Captain Bildad was a well-to-do, retired whaleman. But unlike Captain Peleg—who cared not a rush for what are called serious things, and indeed deemed those self-same serious things the veriest of all trifles—Captain Bildad had not only been originally educated according to the strictest sect of Nantucket Quakerism, but all his subsequent ocean life, and the sight of many unclad, lovely island creatures, round the Horn—all that had not moved this native born Quaker one single jot, had not so much as altered one angle of his vest. Still, for all this immutableness, was there some lack of common consistency about worthy Captain Bildad. Though refusing, from conscientious scruples, to bear arms against land invaders, yet himself had illimitably invaded the Atlantic and Pacific; and though a sworn foe to human bloodshed, yet had he in his straight-bodied coat, spilled tuns[6] upon tuns of leviathan gore. How now in the contemplative evening of his days, the pious Bildad reconciled these things in the reminiscence, I do not know; but it did not seem to concern him much, and very probably he had long since come to the sage and sensible conclusion that a man's religion is one thing, and this practical world quite another. This world pays dividends. Rising from a little cabin-boy in short clothes of the drabbest drab, to a harpooneer in a broad shad-bellied waistcoat;[7] from that becoming boat-header, chief-mate, and captain, and finally a ship-owner; Bildad, as I hinted before, had concluded his adventurous career by wholly retiring from active life at the goodly age of sixty, and dedicating his remaining days to the quiet receiving of his well-earned income.

Now Bildad, I am sorry to say, had the reputation of being an incorrigible old hunks, and in his sea-going days, a bitter, hard task-master. They told me in Nantucket, though it certainly seems a curious story, that when he sailed the old Categut[8] whaleman, his crew, upon arriving home, were mostly all carried ashore to the hospital, sore exhausted and worn out. For a pious man, especially for a Quaker, he was certainly rather hard-hearted, to say the least. He never used to swear, though, at his men, they said; but somehow he got an inordinate quantity of cruel, unmitigated hard work out of them. When Bildad was a chief-mate, to have his drab-colored[9] eye

6. Enormous barrels, each of which holds 252 gallons.
7. Widebodied but tight-waisted.
8. Possibly a whaleship named for the Kattegat Strait between Sweden and Denmark.
9. Dull brown.

intently looking at you, made you feel completely nervous, till you could clutch something—a hammer or a marling-spike,[1] and go to work like mad, at something or other, never mind what. Indolence and idleness perished from before him. His own person was the exact embodiment of his utilitarian character. On his long, gaunt body, he carried no spare flesh, no superfluous beard, his chin having a soft, economical nap to it, like the worn nap of his broad-brimmed hat.[2]

Such, then, was the person that I saw seated on the transom when I followed Captain Peleg down into the cabin. The space between the decks was small; and there, bolt-upright, sat old Bildad, who always sat so, and never leaned, and this to save his coat tails. His broad-brim was placed beside him; his legs were stiffly crossed; his drab vesture was buttoned up to his chin; and spectacles on nose, he seemed absorbed in reading from a ponderous volume.

"Bildad," cried Captain Peleg, "at it again, Bildad, eh? Ye have been studying those Scriptures, now, for the last thirty years, to my certain knowledge. How far ye got, Bildad?"

As if long habituated to such profane talk from his old shipmate, Bildad, without noticing his present irreverence, quietly looked up, and seeing me, glanced again inquiringly towards Peleg.

"He says he's our man, Bildad," said Peleg, "he wants to ship."

"Dost thee?" said Bildad, in a hollow tone, and turning round to me.

"I *dost*," said I unconsciously, he was so intense a Quaker.

"What do ye think of him, Bildad?" said Peleg.

"He'll do," said Bildad, eyeing me, and then went on spelling away at his book in a mumbling tone quite audible.

I thought him the queerest old Quaker I ever saw, especially as Peleg, his friend and old shipmate, seemed such a blusterer. But I said nothing, only looking round me sharply. Peleg now threw open a chest, and drawing forth the ship's articles,[3] placed pen and ink before him, and seated himself at a little table. I began to think it was high time to settle with myself at what terms I would be willing to engage for the voyage. I was already aware that in the whaling business they paid no wages; but all hands, including the captain, received certain shares of the profits called *lays*, and that these lays were proportioned to the degree of importance pertaining to the respective duties of the ship's company. I was also aware that being a green hand at whaling, my own lay would not be very large; but considering that I was used to the sea, could steer a ship, splice a rope, and all that,[4] I made no doubt that from all I had heard I should be offered at least the 275th lay—that is, the 275th part of the clear net proceeds of the voyage, whatever that might eventually amount to. And though the 275th lay was what they call a rather *long lay*, yet it was better than nothing; and if we had a lucky voyage, might pretty nearly pay for the clothing I would wear out on it, not to speak of my three years' beef and board, for which I would not have to pay one stiver.[5]

1. Pointed steel tool for splicing rope.
2. So characteristic of the males of the sect that *broadbrim* was colloquial for "Quaker."
3. The legal document by which owners contracted the services of sailors.
4. Skills an owner would expect of an able seaman.
5. Dutch coin worth about two cents.

It might be thought that this was a poor way to accumulate a princely fortune—and so it was, a very poor way indeed. But I am one of those that never take on about princely fortunes, and am quite content if the world is ready to board and lodge me, while I am putting up at this grim sign of the Thunder Cloud.[6] Upon the whole, I thought that the 275th lay would be about the fair thing, but would not have been surprised had I been offered the 200th, considering I was of a broad-shouldered make.

But one thing, nevertheless, that made me a little distrustful about receiving a generous share of the profits was this: Ashore, I had heard something of both Captain Peleg and his unaccountable old crony Bildad; how that they being the principal proprietors of the Pequod, therefore the other and more inconsiderable and scattered owners, left nearly the whole management of the ship's affairs to these two. And I did not know but what the stingy old Bildad might have a mighty deal to say about shipping hands, especially as I now found him on board the Pequod, quite at home there in the cabin, and reading his Bible as if at his own fireside. Now while Peleg was vainly trying to mend a pen[7] with his jack-knife, old Bildad, to my no small surprise, considering that he was such an interested party in these proceedings; Bildad never heeded us, but went on mumbling to himself out of his book, "'*Lay* not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth—'"[8]

"Well, Captain Bildad," interrupted Peleg, "what d'ye say, what lay shall we give this young man?"

"Thou knowest best," was the sepulchral reply, "the seven hundred and seventy-seventh[9] wouldn't be too much, would it?—'where moth and rust do corrupt, but *lay*—'"

Lay, indeed, thought I, and such a lay! the seven hundred and seventy-seventh! Well, old Bildad, you are determined that I, for one, shall not *lay* up many *lays* here below, where moth and rust do corrupt. It was an exceedingly *long lay* that, indeed; and though from the magnitude of the figure it might at first deceive a landsman, yet the slightest consideration will show that though seven hundred and seventy-seven is a pretty large number, yet, when you come to make a *teenth*[1] of it, you will then see, I say, that the seven hundred and seventy-seventh part of a farthing is a good deal less than seven hundred and seventy-seven gold doubloons; and so I thought at the time.

"Why, blast your eyes, Bildad," cried Peleg, "thou dost not want to swindle this young man! he must have more than that."

"Seven hundred and seventy-seventh," again said Bildad, without lifting his eyes; and then went on mumbling—"'for where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.'"

"I am going to put him down for the three hundredth," said Peleg, "do ye hear that, Bildad! The three hundredth lay, I say."

6. At the ominous inn we all lodge in while here on Earth.
7. Sharpen a quill pen.
8. Jesus's words in Matthew 6.19–21: "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also."
9. Biblical number, from Genesis 5.31: "And all the days of Lamech were seven hundred seventy and seven years: and he died."
1. A tiny fraction (obscure).

Bildad laid down his book, and turning solemnly towards him said, "Captain Peleg, thou hast a generous heart; but thou must consider the duty thou owest to the other owners of this ship—widows and orphans, many of them—and that if we too abundantly reward the labors of this young man, we may be taking the bread from those widows and those orphans.[2] The seven hundred and seventy-seventh lay, Captain Peleg."

"Thou Bildad!" roared Peleg, starting up and clattering about the cabin. "Blast ye, Captain Bildad, if I had followed thy advice in these matters, I would afore now had a conscience to lug about that would be heavy enough to founder the largest ship that ever sailed round Cape Horn."

"Captain Peleg," said Bildad steadily, "thy conscience may be drawing ten inches of water, or ten fathoms,[3] I can't tell; but as thou art still an impenitent man, Captain Peleg, I greatly fear lest thy conscience be but a leaky one; and will in the end sink thee foundering down to the fiery pit, Captain Peleg."

"Fiery pit! fiery pit! ye insult me, man; past all natural bearing, ye insult me. It's an all-fired outrage to tell any human creature that he's bound to hell. Flukes and flames! Bildad, say that again to me, and start my soul-bolts, but I'll—I'll—yes, I'll swallow a live goat with all his hair and horns on. Out of the cabin, ye canting, drab-colored son of a wooden gun—a straight wake with ye!"

As he thundered out this he made a rush at Bildad, but with a marvellous oblique, sliding celerity, Bildad for that time eluded him.

Alarmed at this terrible outburst between the two principal and responsible owners of the ship, and feeling half a mind to give up all idea of sailing in a vessel so questionably owned and temporarily commanded, I stepped aside from the door to give egress to Bildad, who, I made no doubt, was all eagerness to vanish from before the awakened wrath of Peleg. But to my astonishment, he sat down again on the transom very quietly, and seemed to have not the slightest intention of withdrawing. He seemed quite used to impenitent Peleg and his ways. As for Peleg, after letting off his rage as he had, there seemed no more left in him, and he, too, sat down like a lamb, though he twitched a little as if still nervously agitated. "Whew!" he whistled at last—"the squall's gone off to leeward, I think. Bildad, thou used to be good at sharpening a lance, mend that pen, will ye. My jack-knife here needs the grindstone. Thank ye; thank ye, Bildad. Now then, my young man, Ishmael's thy name, didn't ye say? Well then, down ye go here, Ishmael, for the three hundredth lay."

"Captain Peleg," said I, "I have a friend with me who wants to ship too—shall I bring him down to-morrow?"

"To be sure," said Peleg. "Fetch him along, and we'll look at him."

"What lay does *he* want?" groaned Bildad, glancing up from the book in which he had again been burying himself.

"Oh! never thee mind about that, Bildad," said Peleg. "Has he ever whaled it any?" turning to me.

"Killed more whales than I can count, Captain Peleg."

"Well, bring him along then."

2. Exodus 22.22: "Ye shall not afflict any widow, or fatherless child"; Psalm 94.6: "They slay the widow and the stranger, and murder the fatherless."
3. Displacing ten inches of water (with a clear conscience) or sixty feet (so guilty as to be foundering).

And, after signing the papers, off I went; nothing doubting but that I had done a good morning's work, and that the Pequod was the identical ship that Yojo had provided to carry Queequeg and me round the Cape.

But I had not proceeded far, when I began to bethink me that the captain with whom I was to sail yet remained unseen by me; though, indeed, in many cases, a whale-ship will be completely fitted out, and receive all her crew on board, ere the captain makes himself visible by arriving to take command; for sometimes these voyages are so prolonged, and the shore intervals at home so exceedingly brief, that if the captain have a family, or any absorbing concernment of that sort, he does not trouble himself much about his ship in port, but leaves her to the owners till all is ready for sea. However, it is always as well to have a look at him before irrevocably committing yourself into his hands. Turning back I accosted Captain Peleg, inquiring where Captain Ahab was to be found.

"And what dost thou want of Captain Ahab? It's all right enough; thou art shipped."

"Yes, but I should like to see him."

"But I don't think thou wilt be able to at present. I don't know exactly what's the matter with him; but he keeps close inside the house; a sort of sick, and yet he don't look so. In fact, he ain't sick; but no, he isn't well either. Any how, young man, he won't always see me, so I don't suppose he will thee. He's a queer man, Captain Ahab—so some think—but a good one. Oh, thou'lt like him well enough; no fear, no fear. He's a grand, ungodly, god-like man, Captain Ahab; doesn't speak much; but, when he does speak, then you may well listen. Mark ye, be forewarned; Ahab's above the common; Ahab's been in colleges, as well as 'mong the cannibals; been used to deeper wonders than the waves; fixed his fiery lance in mightier, stranger foes than whales. His lance! aye, the keenest and the surest that, out of all our isle! Oh! he ain't Captain Bildad; no, and he ain't Captain Peleg; *he's Ahab*, boy; and Ahab of old, thou knowest, was a crowned king!"

"And a very vile one. When that wicked king was slain, the dogs, did they not lick his blood?"[4]

"Come hither to me—hither, hither," said Peleg, with a significance in his eye that almost startled me. "Look ye, lad; never say that on board the Pequod. Never say it anywhere. Captain Ahab did not name himself. 'Twas a foolish, ignorant whim of his crazy, widowed mother, who died when he was only a twelvemonth old. And yet the old squaw Tistig, at Gay-head,[5] said that the name would somehow prove prophetic. And, perhaps, other fools like her may tell thee the same. I wish to warn thee. It's a lie. I know Captain Ahab well; I've sailed with him as mate years ago; I know what he is—a good man—not a pious, good man, like Bildad, but a swearing good man—something like me—only there's a good deal more of him. Aye, aye, I know that he was never very jolly; and I know that on the passage home, he was a little out of his mind for a spell; but it was the sharp shooting pains in his bleeding stump that brought that about, as any one might see. I know, too,

4. In 1 Kings 21, Ahab covets Naboth's vineyard, and when Naboth will not part with it Ahab's queen, Jezebel, sets men to accuse Naboth falsely of blasphemy, so that he is stoned to death. The prophet Elijah warns Ahab (1 Kings 21.19): "In the place where dogs licked the blood of Naboth shall dogs lick thy blood, even thine." The Lord further warns, through Elijah (verse 23), that the "dogs shall eat Jezebel by the wall of Jezreel."
5. The "most westerly promontory of Martha's Vineyard" (Ch. 27).

that ever since he lost his leg last voyage by that accursed whale, he's been a kind of moody—desperate moody, and savage sometimes; but that will all pass off. And once for all, let me tell thee and assure thee, young man, it's better to sail with a moody good captain than a laughing bad one. So good-bye to thee—and wrong not Captain Ahab, because he happens to have a wicked name. Besides, my boy, he has a wife—not three voyages wedded—a sweet, resigned girl. Think of that; by that sweet girl that old man has a child: hold ye then there can be any utter, hopeless harm in Ahab? No, no, my lad; stricken, blasted, if he be, Ahab has his humanities!"

As I walked away, I was full of thoughtfulness; what had been incidentally revealed to me of Captain Ahab, filled me with a certain wild vagueness of painfulness concerning him. And somehow, at the time, I felt a sympathy and a sorrow for him, but for I don't know what, unless it was the cruel loss of his leg. And yet I also felt a strange awe of him; but that sort of awe, which I cannot at all describe, was not exactly awe; I do not know what it was. But I felt it; and it did not disincline me towards him; though I felt impatience at what seemed like mystery in him, so imperfectly as he was known to me then. However, my thoughts were at length carried in other directions, so that for the present dark Ahab slipped my mind.

CHAPTER 17

THE RAMADAN

As Queequeg's Ramadan. or Fasting and Humiliation, was to continue all day, I did not choose to disturb him till towards night-fall; for I cherish the greatest respect towards everybody's religious obligations, never mind how comical, and could not find it in my heart to undervalue even a congregation of ants worshipping a toad-stool; or those other creatures in certain parts of our earth, who with a degree of footmanism[1] quite unprecedented in other planets, bow down before the torso of a deceased landed proprietor merely on account of the inordinate possessions yet owned and rented in his name.

I say, we good Presbyterian Christians[2] should be charitable in these things, and not fancy ourselves so vastly superior to other mortals, pagans and what not, because of their half-crazy conceits on these subjects. There was Queequeg, now, certainly entertaining the most absurd notions about Yojo and his Ramadan;—but what of that? Queequeg thought he knew what he was about, I suppose; he seemed to be content; and there let him rest. All our arguing with him would not avail; let him be, I say: and Heaven have mercy on us all—Presbyterians and Pagans alike—for we are all somehow dreadfully cracked about the head, and sadly need mending.

Towards evening, when I felt assured that all his performances and rituals must be over, I went up to his room and knocked at the door; but no answer. I tried to open it, but it was fastened inside. "Queequeg," said I softly through the key-hole:—all silent. "I say, Queequeg! Why don't you

1. Obsequiousness.
2. See p. 53, n. 4. This mild theological observation masked bravado—defiance that all but invited attack from Melville's enemies in the Presbyterian press, representing an extreme of the "religious right" of his time. Resentful of being silenced by his Presbyterian publisher, John Wiley, in 1846 (forced to expurgate his attacks on the missionaries from *Typee*), Melville was now laying himself open to attacks that helped end his career as a fiction writer.

speak? It's I—Ishmael." But all remained still as before. I began to grow alarmed. I had allowed him such abundant time; I thought he might have had an apoplectic fit. I looked through the key-hole; but the door opening into an odd corner of the room, the key-hole prospect was but a crooked and sinister one. I could only see part of the foot-board of the bed and a line of the wall, but nothing more. I was surprised to behold resting against the wall the wooden shaft of Queequeg's harpoon, which the landlady the evening previous had taken from him, before our mounting to the chamber. That's strange, thought I; but at any rate, since the harpoon stands yonder, and he seldom or never goes abroad without it, therefore he must be inside here, and no possible mistake.

"Queequeg!—Queequeg!"—all still. Something must have happened. Apoplexy! I tried to burst open the door; but it stubbornly resisted. Running down stairs, I quickly stated my suspicions to the first person I met—the chamber-maid. "La! La!" she cried, "I thought something must be the matter. I went to make the bed after breakfast, and the door was locked; and not a mouse to be heard; and it's been just so silent ever since. But I thought, may be, you had both gone off and locked your baggage in for safe keeping. La! La, ma'am!—Mistress! murder! Mrs. Hussey! apoplexy!"—and with these cries, she ran towards the kitchen, I following.

Mrs. Hussey soon appeared, with a mustard-pot in one hand and a vinegar-cruet in the other, having just broken away from the occupation of attending to the castors,[3] and scolding her little black boy meantime.

"Wood-house!" cried I, "which way to it! Run for God's sake, and fetch something to pry open the door—the axe!—the axe!—he's had a stroke; depend upon it!"—and so saying I was unmethodically rushing up stairs again empty-handed, when Mrs. Hussey interposed the mustard-pot and vinegar-cruet, and the entire castor of her countenance.

"What's the matter with you, young man?"

"Get the axe! For God's sake, run for the doctor, some one, while I pry it open!"

"Look here," said the landlady, quickly putting down the vinegar-cruet, so as to have one hand free; "look here; are you talking about prying open any of my doors?"—and with that she seized my arm. "What's the matter with you? What's the matter with you, shipmate?"

In as calm, but rapid a manner as possible, I gave her to understand the whole case. Unconsciously clapping the mustard-pot to one side of her nose, she ruminated for an instant; then exclaimed—"No! I haven't seen it since I put it there." Running to a little closet under the landing of the stairs, she glanced in, and returning, told me that Queequeg's harpoon was missing. "He's killed himself," she cried. "It's unfort'nate Stiggs done over again—there goes another counterpane—God pity his poor mother!—it will be the ruin of my house. Has the poor lad a sister? Where's that girl?—there, Betty, go to Snarles the Painter, and tell him to paint me a sign, with—'no suicides permitted here, and no smoking in the parlor;'—might as well kill both birds at once.[4] Kill? The Lord be merciful to his ghost! What's that noise there? You, young man, avast there!"

3. Containers for condiments; here, mustard and vinegar.
4. From the proverb about economy of effort, killing two birds with one stone.

And running up after me, she caught me as I was again trying to force open the door.

"I won't allow it; I won't have my premises spoiled. Go for the locksmith, there's one about a mile from here. But avast!" putting her hand in her side-pocket, "here's a key that'll fit, I guess; let's see." And with that, she turned it in the lock; but, alas! Queequeg's supplemental bolt remained unwithdrawn within.

"Have to burst it open," said I, and was running down the entry a little, for a good start, when the landlady caught at me, again vowing I should not break down her premises; but I tore from her, and with a sudden bodily rush dashed myself full against the mark.

With a prodigious noise the door flew open, and the knob slamming against the wall, sent the plaster to the ceiling; and there, good heavens! there sat Queequeg, altogether cool and self-collected; right in the middle of the room; squatting on his hams, and holding Yojo on top of his head. He looked neither one way nor the other way, but sat like a carved image with scarce a sign of active life.

"Queequeg," said I, going up to him, "Queequeg, what's the matter with you?"

"He hain't been a sittin' so all day, has he?" said the landlady.

But all we said, not a word could we drag out of him; I almost felt like pushing him over, so as to change his position, for it was almost intolerable, it seemed so painfully and unnaturally constrained; especially, as in all probability he had been sitting so for upwards of eight or ten hours, going too without his regular meals.

"Mrs. Hussey," said I, "he's *alive* at all events; so leave us, if you please, and I will see to this strange affair myself."

Closing the door upon the landlady, I endeavored to prevail upon Queequeg to take a chair; but in vain. There he sat; and all I could do—for all my polite arts and blandishments—he would not move a peg, nor say a single word, nor even look at me, nor notice my presence in any the slightest way.

I wonder, thought I, if this can possibly be a part of his Ramadan; do they fast on their hams that way in his native island? It must be so; yes, it's part of his creed, I suppose; well, then, let him rest; he'll get up sooner or later, no doubt. It can't last for ever, thank God, and his Ramadan only comes once a year; and I don't believe it's very punctual then.

I went down to supper. After sitting a long time listening to the long stories of some sailors who had just come from a plum-pudding voyage, as they called it (that is, a short whaling-voyage in a schooner or brig, confined to the north of the line,[5] in the Atlantic Ocean only); after listening to these plum-puddingers till nearly eleven o'clock, I went up stairs to go to bed, feeling quite sure by this time Queequeg must certainly have brought his Ramadan to a termination. But no; there he was just where I had left him; he had not stirred an inch. I began to grow vexed with him; it seemed so downright senseless and insane to be sitting there all day and half the night on his hams in a cold room, holding a piece of wood on his head.

"For heaven's sake, Queequeg, get up and shake yourself; get up and have some supper. You'll starve; you'll kill yourself, Queequeg." But not a word did he reply.

5. The equator, the latitudinal line dividing the Northern and Southern hemispheres.

Despairing of him, therefore, I determined to go to bed and to sleep; and no doubt, before a great while, he would follow me. But previous to turning in, I took my heavy bearskin jacket,[6] and threw it over him, as it promised to be a very cold night; and he had nothing but his ordinary round jacket on. For some time, do all I would, I could not get into the faintest doze. I had blown out the candle; and the mere thought of Queequeg—not four feet off—sitting there in that uneasy position, stark alone in the cold and dark; this made me really wretched. Think of it; sleeping all night in the same room with a wide awake pagan on his hams in this dreary, unaccountable Ramadan!

But somehow I dropped off at last, and knew nothing more till break of day; when, looking over the bedside, there squatted Queequeg, as if he had been screwed down to the floor. But as soon as the first glimpse of sun entered the window, up he got, with stiff and grating joints, but with a cheerful look; limped towards me where I lay; pressed his forehead again against mine; and said his Ramadan was over.

Now, as I before hinted, I have no objection to any person's religion, be it what it may, so long as that person does not kill or insult any other person, because that other person don't believe it also. But when a man's religion becomes really frantic; when it is a positive torment to him; and, in fine, makes this earth of ours an uncomfortable inn to lodge in; then I think it high time to take that individual aside and argue the point with him.

And just so I now did with Queequeg. "Queequeg," said I, "get into bed now, and lie and listen to me." I then went on, beginning with the rise and progress of the primitive religions, and coming down to the various religions of the present time, during which time I labored to show Queequeg that all these Lents, Ramadans, and prolonged ham-squattings in cold, cheerless rooms were stark nonsense; bad for the health; useless for the soul; opposed, in short, to the obvious laws of Hygiene and common sense. I told him, too, that he being in other things such an extremely sensible and sagacious savage, it pained me, very badly pained me, to see him now so deplorably foolish about this ridiculous Ramadan of his. Besides, argued I, fasting makes the body cave in; hence the spirit caves in; and all thoughts born of a fast must necessarily be half-starved. This is the reason why most dyspeptic religionists cherish such melancholy notions about their hereafters. In one word, Queequeg, said I, rather digressively; hell is an idea first born on an undigested apple-dumpling; and since then perpetuated through the hereditary dyspepsias nurtured by Ramadans.

I then asked Queequeg whether he himself was ever troubled with dyspepsia; expressing the idea very plainly, so that he could take it in. He said no; only upon one memorable occasion. It was after a great feast given by his father the king, on the gaining of a great battle wherein fifty of the enemy had been killed by about two o'clock in the afternoon, and all cooked and eaten that very evening.

"No more, Queequeg," said I, shuddering; "that will do;" for I knew the inferences without his further hinting them. I had seen a sailor who had visited that very island, and he told me that it was the custom, when a great battle had been gained there, to barbecue all the slain in the yard or

6. Jacket of coarse woolen cloth, not of actual bear skins. Melville's older brother Gansevoort had been in the fur business in the mid-1830s, and at Arrowhead the Melvilles wrapped themselves in buffalo robes for winter rides.

garden of the victor; and then, one by one, they were placed in great wooden trenchers, and garnished round like a pilau, with breadfruit and cocoanuts; and with some parsley in their mouths, were sent round with the victor's compliments to all his friends, just as though these presents were so many Christmas turkeys.[7]

After all, I do not think that my remarks about religion made much impression upon Queequeg. Because, in the first place, he somehow seemed dull of hearing on that important subject, unless considered from his own point of view; and, in the second place, he did not more than one third understand me, couch my ideas simply as I would; and, finally, he no doubt thought he knew a good deal more about the true religion than I did. He looked at me with a sort of condescending concern and compassion, as though he thought it a great pity that such a sensible young man should be so hopelessly lost to evangelical pagan piety.[8]

At last we rose and dressed; and Queequeg, taking a prodigiously hearty breakfast of chowders of all sorts, so that the landlady should not make much profit by reason of his Ramadan, we sallied out to board the Pequod, sauntering along, and picking our teeth with halibut bones.

CHAPTER 18

HIS MARK

As we were walking down the end of the wharf towards the ship, Queequeg carrying his harpoon, Captain Peleg in his gruff voice loudly hailed us from his wigwam, saying he had not suspected my friend was a cannibal, and furthermore announcing that he let no cannibals on board that craft, unless they previously produced their papers.[1]

"What do you mean by that, Captain Peleg?" said I, now jumping on the bulwarks, and leaving my comrade standing on the wharf.

"I mean," he replied, "he must show his papers."

"Yea," said Captain Bildad in his hollow voice, sticking his head from behind Peleg's, out of the wigwam. "He must show that he's converted. Son of darkness," he added, turning to Queequeg, "art thou at present in communion with any Christian church?"

"Why," said I, "he's a member of the first Congregational Church."[2] Here be it said, that many tattooed savages sailing in Nantucket ships at last come to be converted into the churches.

"First Congregational Church," cried Bildad, "what! That worships in Deacon Deuteronomy[3] Coleman's meeting-house?" and so saying, taking out his spectacles, he rubbed them with his great yellow bandana handkerchief,

7. A facetious travesty on the cannibal custom Melville recounts with horror in *Typee*, Ch. 32. Turkey was not yet primarily associated with Thanksgiving.
8. I.e., to Queequeg's proselytizing efforts to win Ishmael to his own cannibal religious faith. Such joking about cultural relativism and particularly about religious relativism triggered some of the most virulent attacks on *Moby-Dick*.
1. Documents certifying their baptism and church membership.
2. In the following paragraphs, Ishmael "skylarks" with the old captains by playing on the name of the Congregational church, from Puritan colonial times the most common denomination all over New England, with one congregation (and "meeting-house") or more in each town, the oldest being designated "first."
3. The fifth book of the Bible (a comically extreme example of the appropriation of biblical names in New England). "Deacon": a layman elected to assist the minister.

and putting them on very carefully, came out of the wigwam, and leaning stiffly over the bulwarks, took a good long look at Queequeg.

"How long hath he been a member?" he then said, turning to me; "not very long, I rather guess, young man."

"No," said Peleg, "and he hasn't been baptized right either, or it would have washed some of that devil's blue off his face."

"Do tell, now," cried Bildad, "is this Philistine[4] a regular member of Deacon Deuteronomy's meeting? I never saw him going there, and I pass it every Lord's day."

"I don't know anything about Deacon Deuteronomy or his meeting," said I, "all I know is, that Queequeg here is a born member of the First Congregational Church. He is a deacon himself, Queequeg is."

"Young man," said Bildad sternly, "thou art skylarking with me—explain thyself, thou young Hittite. What church dost thee mean? answer me."

Finding myself thus hard pushed, I replied. "I mean, sir, the same ancient Catholic Church to which you and I, and Captain Peleg there, and Queequeg here, and all of us, and every mother's son and soul of us belong; the great and everlasting First Congregation of this whole worshipping world; we all belong to that; only some of us cherish some queer crotchets noways touching the grand belief; in *that* we all join hands."

"Splice, thou mean'st *splice* hands," cried Peleg, drawing nearer. "Young man; you'd better ship for a missionary, instead of a fore-mast hand; I never heard a better sermon. Deacon Deuteronomy—why Father Mapple himself couldn't beat it, and he's reckoned something. Come aboard, come aboard; never mind about the papers. I say, tell Quohog[5] there—what's that you call him? tell Quohog to step along. By the great anchor, what a harpoon he's got there! looks like good stuff that; and he handles it about right. I say, Quohog, or whatever your name is, did you ever stand in the head of a whale-boat? did you ever strike a fish?"[6]

Without saying a word, Queequeg, in his wild sort of way, jumped upon the bulwarks, from thence into the bows of one of the whale-boats hanging to the side; and then bracing his left knee, and poising his harpoon, cried out in some such way as this:—

"Cap'ain, you see him small drop tar on water dere? You see him? well, spose him one whale eye, well, den!" and taking sharp aim at it, he darted the iron right over old Bildad's broad brim, clean across the ship's decks, and struck the glistening tar spot out of sight.

"Now," said Queequeg, quietly hauling in the line, "spos-ee him whale-e eye; why, dad whale dead."

"Quick, Bildad," said Peleg, to his partner, who, aghast at the close vicinity of the flying harpoon, had retreated towards the cabin gangway. "Quick, I say, you Bildad, and get the ship's papers. We must have Hedgehog there, I mean Quohog, in one of our boats. Look ye, Quohog, we'll give ye the ninetieth lay, and that's more than ever was given a harpooner yet out of Nantucket."

So down we went into the cabin, and to my great joy Queequeg was soon enrolled among the same ship's company to which I myself belonged.

4. A member of an idolatrous tribe hostile to the Jews, as were the Hittites below.
5. Peleg avoids the pagan name *Queequeg* by converting it into familiar words, *quohog* (a local clam) and then *hedgehog*.
6. Harpoon a whale.

When all preliminaries were over and Peleg had got everything ready for signing, he turned to me and said, "I guess, Quohog there don't know how to write, does he? I say, Quohog, blast ye! dost thou sign thy name or make thy mark?"

But at this question, Queequeg, who had twice or thrice before taken part in similar ceremonies, looked no ways abashed; but taking the offered pen, copied upon the paper, in the proper place, an exact counterpart of a queer round figure[7] which was tattooed upon his arm; so that through Captain Peleg's obstinate mistake touching his appellative, it stood something like this:—

Quohog.
his ✠ mark.

Meanwhile Captain Bildad sat earnestly and steadfastly eyeing Queequeg, and at last rising solemnly and fumbling in the huge pockets of his broad-skirted drab coat, took out a bundle of tracts,[8] and selecting one entitled "The Latter Day Coming; or No Time to Lose,"[9] placed it in Queequeg's hands, and then grasping them and the book with both his, looked earnestly into his eyes, and said, "Son of darkness, I must do my duty by thee; I am part owner of this ship, and feel concerned for the souls of all its crew; if thou still clingest to thy Pagan ways, which I sadly fear, I beseech thee, remain not for aye a Belial bondsman. Spurn the idol Bel, and the hideous dragon; turn from the wrath to come; mind thine eye, I say; oh! goodness gracious! steer clear of the fiery pit!"[1]

Something of the salt sea yet lingered in old Bildad's language, heterogeneously mixed with Scriptural and domestic phrases.

"Avast there, avast there, Bildad, avast now spoiling our harpooner," cried Peleg. "Pious harpooners never make good voyagers—it takes the shark out of 'em; no harpooneer is worth a straw who aint pretty sharkish. There was young Nat Swaine,[2] once the bravest boat-header out of all Nantucket and the Vineyard; he joined the meeting,[3] and never came to good. He got so frightened about his plaguy soul, that he shrinked and sheered away from whales, for fear of after-claps, in case he got stove and went to Davy Jones."[4]

"Peleg! Peleg!" said Bildad, lifting his eyes and hands, "thou thyself, as I myself, hast seen many a perilous time; thou knowest, Peleg, what it is to have the fear of death; how, then, can'st thou prate in this ungodly guise. Thou beliest thine own heart, Peleg. Tell me, when this same Pequod here

7. The cross printed in the English and American editions in 1851 (and imitated here) is not "a queer round figure," and was probably supplied by the original typesetter in place of the figure in the manuscript, the words of which were most likely in Melville's sister Augusta's hand.
8. Pamphlets proselytizing for one religious sect or another.
9. I.e., the last day of Earth or the following one, the Day of Judgment. Melville and his older sister Helen derived much quiet jocular bemusement at their sister Augusta's zeal in passing out just such tracts inculcating teachings of the Dutch Reformed Church.
1. A mix of scriptural and salt-sea phrases. "Belial bondsman": a son of the devil (see 2 Corinthians 6.15). "The idol Bel, and the hideous dragon": a reference to the apocryphal book Bel and the Dragon ("cut off from the end of Daniel," according to the King James translators), which relates Daniel's conquest of the Babylonian god Bel. "The wrath to come": see 1 Thessalonians 1:10. "Mind thine eye": watch out. "Goodness gracious": avoids taking the name of God in vain; in the mouth of an old salt, a comically mild expression. "Steer clear": keep away. "Fiery pit": hell.
2. Presumably not the Nathan Swaine of Ch. 3, the prodigious whale killer of the end of the 18th century.
3. I.e., the Friends Church, whose members come together in a "Quaker meeting," not an organized service with a minister. "Boat-header": the man who lances and kills the harpooned whale, as in Ch. 62.
4. He fears hell fire after death by a whale and sinking to the bottom of the ocean (Davy Jones's locker).

had her three masts overboard in that typhoon on Japan, that same voyage when thou went mate with Captain Ahab, did'st thou not think of Death and the Judgment then?"

"Hear him, hear him now," cried Peleg, marching across the cabin, and thrusting his hands far down into his pockets,—"hear him, all of ye. Think of that! When every moment we thought the ship would sink! Death and the Judgment then? What? With all three masts making such an everlasting thundering against the side; and every sea breaking over us, fore and aft. Think of Death and the Judgment then? No! no time to think about Death then. Life was what Captain Ahab and I was thinking of; and how to save all hands—how to rig jury-masts[5]—how to get into the nearest port; that was what I was thinking of."

Bildad said no more, but buttoning up his coat, stalked on deck, where we followed him. There he stood, very quietly overlooking some sailmakers who were mending a top-sail in the waist.[6] Now and then he stooped to pick up a patch, or save an end of the tarred twine, which otherwise might have been wasted.

CHAPTER 19

THE PROPHET

"Shipmates, have ye shipped in that ship?"

Queequeg and I had just left the Pequod, and were sauntering away from the water, for the moment each occupied with his own thoughts, when the above words were put to us by a stranger, who, pausing before us, leveled his massive forefinger at the vessel in question. He was but shabbily appareled in faded jacket and patched trowsers; a rag of a black handkerchief investing his neck. A confluent small-pox had in all directions flowed over his face, and left it like the complicated ribbed bed of a torrent, when the rushing waters have been dried up.

"Have ye shipped in her?" he repeated.

"You mean the ship Pequod, I suppose," said I, trying to gain a little more time for an uninterrupted look at him.

"Aye, the Pequod—that ship there," he said, drawing back his whole arm, and then rapidly shoving it straight out from him, with a fixed bayonet of his pointed finger darted full at the object.

"Yes," said I, "we have just signed the articles."

"Anything down there about your souls?"

"About what?"

"Oh, perhaps you hav'n't got any," he said quickly. "No matter though, I know many chaps that hav'n't got any,—good luck to 'em; and they are all the better off for it. A soul's a sort of a fifth wheel to a wagon."

"What are you jabbering about, shipmate?" said I.

"*He's* got enough, though, to make up for all deficiencies of that sort in other chaps," abruptly said the stranger, placing a nervous emphasis upon the word *he*.

5. Temporary replacement masts.
6. Midsection of the top deck.

"Queequeg," said I, "let's go; this fellow has broken loose from somewhere; he's talking about something and somebody we don't know."

"Stop!" cried the stranger. "Ye said true—ye hav'n't seen Old Thunder yet, have ye?"

"Who's Old Thunder?" said I, again riveted with the insane earnestness of his manner.

"Captain Ahab."

"What! the captain of our ship, the Pequod?"

"Aye, among some of us old sailor chaps, he goes by that name. Ye hav'n't seen him yet, have ye?"

"No, we hav'n't. He's sick they say, but is getting better, and will be all right again before long."

"All right again before long!" laughed the stranger, with a solemnly derisive sort of laugh. "Look ye; when Captain Ahab is all right, then this left arm of mine will be all right; not before."

"What do you know about him?"

"What did they *tell* you about him? Say that!"

"They didn't tell much of anything about him; only I've heard that he's a good whale-hunter, and a good captain to his crew."

"That's true, that's true—yes, both true enough. But you must jump when he gives an order. Step and growl; growl and go—that's the word with Captain Ahab. But nothing about that thing that happened to him off Cape Horn, long ago, when he lay like dead for three days and nights; nothing about that deadly scrimmage with the Spaniard afore the altar in Santa?—heard nothing about that, eh? Nothing about the silver calabash he spat into? And nothing about his losing his leg last voyage, according to the prophecy? Didn't ye hear a word about them matters and something more, eh? No, I don't think ye did; how could ye? Who knows it? Not all Nantucket, I guess. But hows'ever, mayhap, ye've heard tell about the leg, and how he lost it; aye, ye have heard of that, I dare say. Oh yes, *that* every one knows a'most—I mean they know he's only one leg; and that a parmacetti took the other off."

"My friend," said I, "what all this gibberish of yours is about, I don't know, and I don't much care; for it seems to me that you must be a little damaged in the head. But if you are speaking of Captain Ahab, of that ship there, the Pequod, then let me tell you, that I know all about the loss of his leg."

"*All* about it, eh—sure you do?—all?"

"Pretty sure."

With finger pointed and eye leveled at the Pequod, the beggar-like stranger stood a moment, as if in a troubled reverie; then starting a little, turned and said:—"Ye've shipped, have ye? Names down on the papers? Well, well, what's signed, is signed; and what's to be, will be; and then again, perhaps it wont be, after all. Any how, it's all fixed and arranged a'ready; and some sailors or other must go with him, I suppose; as well these as any other men, God pity 'em! Morning to ye, shipmates, morning; the ineffable heavens bless ye; I'm sorry I stopped ye."

"Look here, friend," said I, "if you have anything important to tell us, out with it; but if you are only trying to bamboozle us, you are mistaken in your game; that's all I have to say."

"And it's said very well, and I like to hear a chap talk up that way; you are just the man for him—the likes of ye. Morning to ye, shipmates,

morning! Oh! when ye get there, tell 'em I've concluded not to make one of 'em."

"Ah, my dear fellow, you can't fool us that way—you can't fool us. It is the easiest thing in the world for a man to look as if he had a great secret in him."

"Morning to ye, shipmates, morning."

"Morning it is," said I. "Come along, Queequeg, let's leave this crazy man. But stop, tell me your name, will you?"

"Elijah."[1]

Elijah! thought I, and we walked away, both commenting, after each other's fashion, upon this ragged old sailor; and agreed that he was nothing but a humbug, trying to be a bugbear.[2] But we had not gone perhaps above a hundred yards, when chancing to turn a corner, and looking back as I did so, who should be seen but Elijah following us, though at a distance. Somehow, the sight of him struck me so, that I said nothing to Queequeg of his being behind, but passed on with my comrade, anxious to see whether the stranger would turn the same corner that we did. He did; and then it seemed to me that he was dogging us, but with what intent I could not for the life of me imagine. This circumstance, coupled with his ambiguous, half-hinting, half-revealing, shrouded sort of talk, now begat in me all kinds of vague wonderments and half-apprehensions, and all connected with the Pequod; and Captain Ahab; and the leg he had lost; and the Cape Horn fit; and the silver calabash; and what Captain Peleg had said of him, when I left the ship the day previous; and the prediction of the squaw Tistig; and the voyage we had bound ourselves to sail; and a hundred other shadowy things.

I was resolved to satisfy myself whether this ragged Elijah was really dogging us or not, and with that intent crossed the way with Queequeg, and on that side of it retraced our steps. But Elijah passed on, without seeming to notice us. This relieved me; and once more, and finally as it seemed to me, I pronounced him in my heart, a humbug.

CHAPTER 20

ALL ASTIR

A day or two passed, and there was great activity aboard the Pequod. Not only were the old sails being mended, but new sails were coming on board, and bolts of canvas, and coils of rigging; in short, everything betokened that the ship's preparations were hurrying to a close. Captain Peleg seldom or never went ashore, but sat in his wigwam keeping a sharp lookout upon the hands: Bildad did all the purchasing and providing at the stores; and the men employed in the hold and on the rigging were working till long after night-fall.

On the day following Queequeg's signing the articles, word was given at all the inns where the ship's company were stopping, that their chests must be on board before night, for there was no telling how soon the vessel might be sailing. So Queequeg and I got down our traps,[1] resolving, however, to sleep ashore till the last. But it seems they always give very

1. The name is that of the prophet who denounced Ahab (1 Kings 19–22).
2. An obvious phony acting like a scary bogeyman.
1. Got their belongings into their sailor chests and stowed aboard the *Pequod*.

long notice in these cases, and the ship did not sail for several days. But no wonder; there was a good deal to be done, and there is no telling how many things to be thought of, before the Pequod was fully equipped.

Every one knows what a multitude of things—beds, sauce-pans, knives and forks, shovels and tongs, napkins, nut-crackers, and what not, are indispensable to the business of housekeeping. Just so with whaling, which necessitates a three-years' housekeeping upon the wide ocean, far from all grocers, coster-mongers,[2] doctors, bakers, and bankers. And though this also holds true of merchant vessels, yet not by any means to the same extent as with whalemen. For besides the great length of the whaling voyage, the numerous articles peculiar to the prosecution of the fishery, and the impossibility of replacing them at the remote harbors usually frequented, it must be remembered, that of all ships, whaling vessels are the most exposed to accidents of all kinds, and especially to the destruction and loss of the very things upon which the success of the voyage most depends. Hence, the spare boats, spare spars, and spare lines and harpoons, and spare everythings, almost, but a spare Captain and duplicate ship.

At the period of our arrival at the Island, the heaviest stowage of the Pequod had been almost completed; comprising her beef, bread, water, fuel, and iron hoops and staves. But, as before hinted, for some time there was a continual fetching and carrying on board of divers odds and ends of things, both large and small.

Chief among those who did this fetching and carrying was Captain Bildad's sister, a lean old lady of a most determined and indefatigable spirit, but withal very kindhearted, who seemed resolved that, if *she* could help it, nothing should be found wanting in the Pequod, after once fairly getting to sea. At one time she would come on board with a jar of pickles for the steward's pantry; another time with a bunch of quills[3] for the chief mate's desk, where he kept his log; a third time with a roll of flannel for the small of some one's rheumatic back. Never did any woman better deserve her name, which was Charity[4]—Aunt Charity, as everybody called her. And like a sister of charity[5] did this charitable Aunt Charity bustle about hither and thither, ready to turn her hand and heart to anything that promised to yield safety, comfort, and consolation to all on board a ship in which her beloved brother Bildad was concerned, and in which she herself owned a score or two of well-saved dollars.

But it was startling to see this excellent hearted Quakeress coming on board, as she did the last day, with a long oil-ladle in one hand, and a still longer whaling lance[6] in the other. Nor was Bildad himself nor Captain Peleg at all backward. As for Bildad, he carried about with him a long list of the articles needed, and at every fresh arrival, down went his mark opposite that article upon the paper. Every once and a while Peleg came

2. Street peddlers, then still common in New York and other cities.
3. Goose feathers, the points of which were sharpened for use as pens.
4. Another biblical name, from 1 Corinthians 13, where charity is the greatest of the three graces described by Paul. There, it means Christian (not erotic) love and right feeling toward others; here, it is used in its more general sense of benevolence. This old Quaker is both a (non-Catholic) sister bestowing gifts and a sister of the uncharitable Captain Bildad.
5. A community of women organized to help the poor.
6. See the illustrations in "Whaling and Whalecraft" on pp. 446–53.

running out of his whalebone den, roaring at the men down the hatchways, roaring up to the riggers[7] at the mast-head, and then concluded by roaring back into his wigwam.

During these days of preparation, Queequeg and I often visited the craft, and as often I asked about Captain Ahab, and how he was, and when he was going to come on board his ship. To these questions they would answer, that he was getting better and better, and was expected aboard every day; meantime, the two Captains, Peleg and Bildad, could attend to everything necessary to fit the vessel for the voyage. If I had been downright honest with myself, I would have seen very plainly in my heart that I did but half fancy being committed this way to so long a voyage, without once laying my eyes on the man who was to be the absolute dictator of it, so soon as the ship sailed out upon the open sea. But when a man suspects any wrong, it sometimes happens that if he be already involved in the matter, he insensibly strives to cover up his suspicions even from himself. And much this way it was with me. I said nothing, and tried to think nothing.

At last it was given out that some time next day the ship would certainly sail. So next morning, Queequeg and I took a very early start.

CHAPTER 21

GOING ABOARD

It was nearly six o'clock, but only grey imperfect misty dawn, when we drew nigh the wharf.

"There are some sailors running ahead there, if I see right," said I to Queequeg, "it can't be shadows; she's off by sunrise, I guess; come on!"

"Avast!" cried a voice, whose owner at the same time coming close behind us, laid a hand upon both our shoulders, and then insinuating himself between us, stood stooping forward a little, in the uncertain twilight, strangely peering from Queequeg to me. It was Elijah.

"Going aboard?"

"Hands off, will you," said I.

"Lookee here," said Queequeg, shaking himself, "go 'way!"

"Aint going aboard, then?"

"Yes, we are," said I, "but what business is that of yours? Do you know, Mr. Elijah, that I consider you a little impertinent?"

"No, no, no; I wasn't aware of that," said Elijah, slowly and wonderingly looking from me to Queequeg, with the most unaccountable glances.

"Elijah," said I, "you will oblige my friend and me by withdrawing. We are going to the Indian and Pacific Oceans, and would prefer not to be detained."[1]

"Ye be, be ye? Coming back afore breakfast?"

"He's cracked, Queequeg," said I, "come on."

"Holloa!" cried stationary Elijah, hailing us when we had removed a few paces.

"Never mind him," said I, "Queequeg, come on."

7. Men who prepare the ship's rigging (ropes).

1. Ishmael expects to sail around the Cape of Good Hope into the Indian Ocean, not around Cape Horn. (Melville himself never sailed around the Cape of Good Hope.)

But he stole up to us again, and suddenly clapping his hand on my shoulder, said—"Did ye see anything looking like men going towards that ship a while ago?"[2]

Struck by this plain matter-of-fact question, I answered, saying "Yes, I thought I did see four or five men; but it was too dim to be sure."

"Very dim, very dim," said Elijah. "Morning to ye."

Once more we quitted him; but once more he came softly after us; and touching my shoulder again, said, "See if you can find 'em now, will ye?"

"Find who?"

"Morning to ye! morning to ye!" he rejoined, again moving off. "Oh! I was going to warn ye against—but never mind, never mind—it's all one, all in the family too;—sharp frost this morning, ain't it? Good bye to ye. Shan't see ye again very soon, I guess; unless it's before the Grand Jury."[3] And with these cracked words he finally departed, leaving me, for the moment, in no small wonderment at his frantic impudence.

At last, stepping on board the Pequod, we found everything in profound quiet, not a soul moving. The cabin entrance was locked within; the hatches were all on, and lumbered with coils of rigging. Going forward to the forecastle, we found the slide of the scuttle[4] open. Seeing a light, we went down, and found only an old rigger there, wrapped in a tattered peajacket. He was thrown at whole length upon two chests, his face downwards and inclosed in his folded arms. The profoundest slumber slept upon him.

"Those sailors we saw, Queequeg, where can they have gone to?" said I, looking dubiously at the sleeper. But it seemed that, when on the wharf, Queequeg had not at all noticed what I now alluded to; hence I would have thought myself to have been optically deceived in that matter, were it not for Elijah's otherwise inexplicable question. But I beat the thing down; and again marking the sleeper, jocularly hinted to Queequeg that perhaps we had best sit up with the body;[5] telling him to establish himself accordingly. He put his hand upon the sleeper's rear, as though feeling if it was soft enough; and then, without more ado, sat quietly down there.

"Gracious! Queequeg, don't sit there," said I.

"Oh! perry dood seat," said Queequeg, "my country way; won't hurt him face."

"Face!" said I, "call that his face? very benevolent countenance then; but how hard he breathes, he's heaving himself; get off, Queequeg, you are heavy, it's grinding the face of the poor.[6] Get off, Queequeg! Look, he'll twitch you off soon. I wonder he don't wake."

2. Elijah's phrase ambiguously suggests that there is something unusual about them, something Ishmael had not seen.
3. The Last Judgment.
4. Opening in the deck.
5. Ishmael jokes that the sleeper is dead and that they should follow the old respectful ritual and sit up with the body, awaiting the funeral.
6. When Queequeg calls the sleeper's buttocks his "face" (compare the modern use of *cheeks*), Ishmael mockingly accuses him of oppression—Isaiah 3.15: "What mean ye that ye beat my people to pieces, and grind the faces of the poor? said the Lord God of hosts." This use of biblical phrases in jocular contexts angered some reviewers, but may reflect Melville's saturation in biblical language rather than disrespect toward the Bible. Anyone interested in this problematical use of language might want to read Melville's second book, *Omoo*, a South Sea adventure remarkably laced with biblical phrases.

Queequeg removed himself to just beyond the head of the sleeper, and lighted his tomahawk pipe. I sat at the feet. We kept the pipe passing over the sleeper, from one to the other. Meanwhile, upon questioning him, in his broken fashion Queequeg gave me to understand that, in his land, owing to the absence of settees and sofas of all sorts, the king, chiefs, and great people generally, were in the custom of fattening some of the lower orders for ottomans; and to furnish a house comfortably in that respect, you had only to buy up eight or ten lazy fellows, and lay them round in the piers and alcoves. Besides, it was very convenient on an excursion; much better than those garden-chairs which are convertible into walking-sticks; upon occasion, a chief calling his attendant, and desiring him to make a settee of himself under a spreading tree, perhaps in some damp marshy place.

While narrating these things, every time Queequeg received the tomahawk from me, he flourished the hatchet-side of it over the sleeper's head.

"What's that for, Queequeg?"

"Perry easy, kill-e; oh! perry easy!"

He was going on with some wild reminiscences about his tomahawk-pipe, which, it seemed, had in its two uses both brained his foes and soothed his soul, when we were directly attracted to the sleeping rigger. The strong vapor now completely filling the contracted hole, it began to tell upon him. He breathed with a sort of muffledness; then seemed troubled in the nose; then revolved over once or twice; then sat up and rubbed his eyes.

"Holloa!" he breathed at last, "who be ye smokers?"

"Shipped men," answered I, "when does she sail?"

"Aye, aye, ye are going in her, be ye? She sails to-day. The Captain came aboard last night."

"What Captain?—Ahab?"

"Who but him indeed?"

I was going to ask him some further questions concerning Ahab, when we heard a noise on deck.

"Holloa! Starbuck's astir," said the rigger. "He's a lively chief mate, that; good man, and a pious; but all alive now, I must turn to." And so saying he went on deck, and we followed.

It was now clear sunrise. Soon the crew came on board in twos and threes; the riggers bestirred themselves; the mates were actively engaged; and several of the shore people were busy in bringing various last things on board. Meanwhile Captain Ahab remained invisibly enshrined within his cabin.

CHAPTER 22

MERRY CHRISTMAS

At length, towards noon, upon the final dismissal of the ship's riggers, and after the Pequod had been hauled out from the wharf, and after the ever-thoughtful Charity had come off in a whaleboat, with her last gifts—a night-cap for Stubb, the second mate, her brother-in-law, and a spare Bible for the steward—after all this, the two captains, Peleg and Bildad, issued from the cabin, and turning to the chief mate, Peleg said:

"Now, Mr. Starbuck, are you sure everything is right? Captain Ahab is all ready—just spoke to him—nothing more to be got from shore, eh? Well, call all hands, then. Muster 'em aft here—blast 'em!"[1]

"No need of profane words, however great the hurry, Peleg," said Bildad, "but away with thee, friend Starbuck, and do our bidding."

How now! Here upon the very point of starting for the voyage, Captain Peleg and Captain Bildad were going it with a high hand on the quarter-deck,[2] just as if they were to be joint-commanders at sea, as well as to all appearances in port. And, as for Captain Ahab, no sign of him was yet to be seen; only, they said he was in the cabin. But then, the idea was, that his presence was by no means necessary in getting the ship under weigh, and steering her well out to sea. Indeed, as that was not at all his proper business, but the pilot's;[3] and as he was not yet completely recovered—so they said—therefore, Captain Ahab stayed below. And all this seemed natural enough; especially as in the merchant service many captains never show themselves on deck for a considerable time after heaving up the anchor, but remain over the cabin table, having a farewell merry-making with their shore friends, before they quit the ship for good with the pilot.

But there was not much chance to think over the matter, for Captain Peleg was now all alive. He seemed to do most of the talking and commanding, and not Bildad.

"Aft here, ye sons of bachelors," he cried, as the sailors lingered at the main-mast. "Mr. Starbuck, drive 'em aft."

"Strike the tent there!"—was the next order. As I hinted before, this whalebone marquee was never pitched except in port; and on board the Pequod, for thirty years, the order to strike the tent was well known to be the next thing to heaving up the anchor.

"Man the capstan! Blood and thunder!—jump!"—was the next command, and the crew sprang for the handspikes.[4]

Now, in getting under weigh, the station generally occupied by the pilot is the forward part of the ship. And here Bildad, who, with Peleg, be it known, in addition to his other offices, was one of the licensed pilots of the port—he being suspected to have got himself made a pilot in order to save the Nantucket pilot-fee to all the ships he was concerned in, for he never piloted any other craft—Bildad, I say, might now be seen actively engaged in looking over the bows for the approaching anchor, and at intervals singing what seemed a dismal stave of psalmody, to cheer the hands at the windlass,[5] who roared forth some sort of a chorus about the girls in Booble Alley,[6] with hearty good will. Nevertheless, not three days previous, Bildad had told them that no profane songs would be allowed on board

1. Not quite an oath because Peleg does not say "God blast 'em!" but pious Bildad calls it "profane," whereupon Peleg (later) substitutes "sons of bachelors," arguably funnier than the common epithet he avoids using.
2. The main deck behind the mainmast, by usage the captain's domain.
3. A temporary captain, based in the port and wise in the peculiar hazards of the local waters, was entrusted with steering ships out of and into harbor.
4. Poles used as levers.
5. A barrel-shaped device for reeling in the chains of the heavy anchor, powered by many crewmen at the "handspikes."
6. Sailors' name for a slum street frequented by prostitutes. Melville describes such a Liverpool street in *Redburn* (1849). The men customarily sing, with leader and "chorus," lively nonreligious ("profane") work songs (chanteys), roaring forth to coordinate their rhythmic efforts. The song referred to here has not been identified, but was not one based on the hymns of Isaac Watts (1674–1748), such as the song Bildad sings later.

the Pequod, particularly in getting under weigh: and Charity, his sister, had placed a small choice copy of Watts in each seaman's berth.

Meantime, overseeing the other part of the ship, Captain Peleg ripped and swore astern in the most frightful manner. I almost thought he would sink the ship before the anchor could be got up; involuntarily I paused on my handspike, and told Queequeg to do the same, thinking of the perils we both ran, in starting on the voyage with such a devil for a pilot. I was comforting myself, however, with the thought that in pious Bildad might be found some salvation, spite of his seven hundred and seventy-seventh lay; when I felt a sudden sharp poke in my rear, and turning round, was horrified at the apparition of Captain Peleg in the act of withdrawing his leg from my immediate vicinity. That was my first kick.[7]

"Is that the way they heave in the marchant service?" he roared. "Spring,[8] thou sheep-head; spring, and break thy backbone! Why don't ye spring, I say, all of ye—spring! Quohog! spring, thou chap with the red whiskers; spring there, Scotch-cap;[9] spring, thou green pants. Spring, I say, all of ye, and spring your eyes out!" And so saying, he moved along the windlass, here and there using his leg very freely, while imperturbable Bildad kept leading off with his psalmody.[1] Thinks I, Captain Peleg must have been drinking something to-day.

At last the anchor was up, the sails were set, and off we glided. It was a short, cold Christmas; and as the short northern day merged into night, we found ourselves almost broad upon the wintry ocean, whose freezing spray cased us in ice, as in polished armor. The long rows of teeth on the bulwarks glistened in the moonlight; and like the white ivory tusks of some huge elephant, vast curving icicles depended from the bows.

Lank Bildad, as pilot, headed the first watch,[2] and ever and anon, as the old craft deep dived into the green seas, and sent the shivering frost all over her, and the winds howled, and the cordage rang, his steady notes were heard,—

"Sweet fields beyond the swelling flood,
Stand dressed in living green.
So to the Jews old Canaan stood,
While Jordan rolled between."[3]

Never did those sweet words sound more sweetly to me than then. They were full of hope and fruition. Spite of this frigid winter night in the boisterous Atlantic, spite of my wet feet and wetter jacket, there was yet, it then seemed to me, many a pleasant haven in store; and meads and glades so eternally vernal, that the grass shot up by the spring, untrodden, unwilted, remains at midsummer.

At last we gained such an offing, that the two pilots were needed no longer. The stout sail-boat that had accompanied us began ranging alongside.

7. After this passage, neither Ishmael nor any other crewman is kicked.
8. As he moves along, Peleg singles out, kicks, and exhorts the men to strain ("heave") and exert all muscles to the utmost ("spring").
9. Brimless woolen cap with two tails or streamers.
1. Bildad tries to set their work rhythm by leading them in a dismal psalm.
2. On voyages, days were usually divided into parts called *watches* (mostly of four hours). Each crewman was assigned to a group (also called a *watch*) under one of the officers and was on and off duty in alternate watches.
3. Third stanza of Watts's "A Prospect of Heaven Makes Death Easy."

It was curious and not unpleasing, how Peleg and Bildad were affected at this juncture, especially Captain Bildad. For loath to depart, yet; very loath to leave, for good, a ship bound on so long and perilous a voyage—beyond both stormy Capes; a ship in which some thousands of his hard earned dollars were invested; a ship, in which an old shipmate sailed as captain; a man almost as old as he, once more starting to encounter all the terrors of the pitiless jaw; loath to say good-bye to a thing so every way brimful of every interest to him,—poor old Bildad lingered long; paced the deck with anxious strides; ran down into the cabin to speak another farewell word there; again came on deck, and looked to windward; looked towards the wide and endless waters, only bounded by the far-off unseen Eastern Continents; looked towards the land; looked aloft; looked right and left; looked everywhere and nowhere; and at last, mechanically coiling a rope upon its pin, convulsively grasped stout Peleg by the hand, and holding up a lantern, for a moment stood gazing heroically in his face, as much as to say, "Nevertheless, friend Peleg, I can stand it; yes, I can."

As for Peleg himself, he took it more like a philosopher; but for all his philosophy, there was a tear twinkling in his eye, when the lantern came too near. And he, too, did not a little run from cabin to deck—now a word below, and now a word with Starbuck, the chief mate.

But, at last, he turned to his comrade, with a final sort of look about him,—"Captain Bildad—come, old shipmate, we must go. Back the main-yard there![4] Boat ahoy! Stand by to come close alongside, now! Careful, careful!—come, Bildad, boy—say your last. Luck to ye, Starbuck—luck to ye, Mr. Stubb—luck to ye, Mr. Flask—good-bye, and good luck to ye all—and this day three years I'll have a hot supper smoking for ye in old Nantucket. Hurrah and away!"

"God bless ye, and have ye in His holy keeping, men,"[5] murmured old Bildad, almost incoherently. "I hope ye'll have fine weather now, so that Captain Ahab may soon be moving among ye—a pleasant sun[6] is all he needs, and ye'll have plenty of them in the tropic voyage ye go. Be careful in the hunt, ye mates. Don't stave[7] the boats needlessly, ye harpooners; good white cedar plank is raised full three per cent. within the year. Don't forget your prayers, either. Mr. Starbuck, mind that cooper don't waste the spare staves. Oh! the sail-needles are in the green locker! Don't whale it too much a' Lord's days,[8] men; but don't miss a fair chance either, that's rejecting Heaven's good gifts. Have an eye to the molasses tierce, Mr. Stubb; it was a little leaky, I thought. If ye touch at the islands, Mr. Flask, beware of fornication. Good-bye, good-bye! Don't keep that cheese too long down in the hold, Mr. Starbuck; it'll spoil. Be careful with the butter—twenty cents the pound it was, and mind ye, if—"

"Come, come, Captain Bildad; stop palavering,—away!" and with that, Peleg hurried him over the side, and both dropt into the boat.

Ship and boat diverged; the cold, damp night breeze blew between; a screaming gull flew overhead; the two hulls wildly rolled; we gave three heavy-hearted cheers, and blindly plunged like fate into the lone Atlantic.

4. Slow the ship.
5. Bildad's benediction is from Numbers 6.24: "The Lord bless thee, and keep thee."
6. See Numbers 6.25: "The Lord make his face shine upon thee."
7. Crush. To get a close fling of a lance an impetuous harpooneer may urge the crew right up against the whale, which then may stave the boat.
8. Exodus 20.8: "Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy." Quakers avoid (as pagan) the English names of the days of the week.

CHAPTER 23

THE LEE SHORE

Some chapters back, one Bulkington was spoken of, a tall, new-landed mariner, encountered in New Bedford at the inn.

When on that shivering winter's night, the Pequod thrust her vindictive bows into the cold malicious waves, who should I see standing at her helm but Bulkington! I looked with sympathetic awe and fearfulness upon the man, who in mid-winter just landed from a four years' dangerous voyage, could so unrestingly push off again for still another tempestuous term. The land seemed scorching to his feet. Wonderfullest things are ever the unmentionable; deep memories yield no epitaphs; this six-inch chapter is the stoneless grave of Bulkington. Let me only say that it fared with him as with the storm-tossed ship, that miserably drives along the leeward land. The port would fain give succor; the port is pitiful; in the port is safety, comfort, hearthstone, supper, warm blankets, friends, all that's kind to our mortalities.[1] But in that gale, the port, the land, is that ship's direst jeopardy; she must fly all hospitality; one touch of land, though it but graze the keel, would make her shudder through and through. With all her might she crowds all sail off shore; in so doing, fights 'gainst the very winds that fain would blow her homeward; seeks all the lashed sea's landlessness again; for refuge's sake forlornly rushing into peril; her only friend her bitterest foe!

Know ye,[2] now, Bulkington? Glimpses do ye seem to see of that mortally[3] intolerable truth; that all deep, earnest thinking is but the intrepid effort of the soul to keep the open independence of her sea; while the wildest winds of heaven and earth conspire to cast her on the treacherous, slavish shore?

But as in landlessness alone resides the highest truth, shoreless, indefinite as God—so, better is it to perish in that howling infinite, than be ingloriously dashed upon the lee, even if that were safety! For worm-like, then, oh! who would craven crawl to land! Terrors of the terrible! is all this agony so vain? Take heart, take heart, O Bulkington! Bear thee grimly, demigod! Up from the spray of thy ocean-perishing—straight up, leaps thy apotheosis!

CHAPTER 24

THE ADVOCATE[1]

As Queequeg and I are now fairly embarked in this business of whaling; and as this business of whaling has somehow come to be regarded among

1. Ordinary human feelings and vulnerabilities.
2. The reader—or Bulkington, who is addressed in the next paragraph.
3. All but intolerable, unbearable, to ordinary human perceptions.

1. Ishmael now acts as lawyer, arguing for the business of whaling. Here and in subsequent chapters, footnotes point out some of Melville's heavier debts to his printed sources for information about whales and whaling. Mansfield and Vincent (1952, p. 659) point out that the "bulk of this chapter was derived in spirit and in ideas" from Thomas Beale's *The Natural History of the Sperm Whale* (1839), but that William Scoresby Jr.'s *An Account of the Arctic Regions, with a History and Description of the Northern Whale-Fishery* (1820) and J. Ross Browne's *Etchings of a Whaling Cruise* (1846) "also furnished suggestions."

landsmen as a rather unpoetical and disreputable pursuit; therefore, I am all anxiety to convince ye, ye landsmen, of the injustice hereby done to us hunters of whales.

In the first place, it may be deemed almost superfluous to establish the fact, that among people at large, the business of whaling is not accounted on a level with what are called the liberal professions. If a stranger were introduced into any miscellaneous metropolitan society, it would but slightly advance the general opinion of his merits, were he presented to the company as a harpooner, say; and if in emulation of the naval officers he should append the initials S. W. F. (Sperm Whale Fishery) to his visiting card,[2] such a procedure would be deemed pre-eminently presuming and ridiculous.

Doubtless one leading reason why the world declines honoring us whalemen, is this: they think that, at best, our vocation amounts to a butchering sort of business; and that when actively engaged therein, we are surrounded by all manner of defilements. Butchers we are, that is true. But butchers, also, and butchers of the bloodiest badge have been all Martial Commanders whom the world invariably delights to honor. And as for the matter of the alleged uncleanliness of our business, ye shall soon be initiated into certain facts hitherto pretty generally unknown, and which, upon the whole, will triumphantly plant the sperm whale-ship at least among the cleanliest things of this tidy earth. But even granting the charge in question to be true; what disordered slippery decks of a whale-ship are comparable to the unspeakable carrion of those battle-fields from which so many soldiers return to drink in all ladies' plaudits? And if the idea of peril so much enhances the popular conceit[3] of the soldier's profession; let me assure ye that many a veteran who has freely marched up to a battery, would quickly recoil at the apparition of the sperm whale's vast tail, fanning into eddies the air over his head. For what are the comprehensible terrors of man compared with the interlinked terrors and wonders of God!

But, though the world scouts at us whale hunters, yet does it unwittingly pay us the profoundest homage; yea, an all-abounding adoration! for almost all the tapers,[4] lamps, and candles that burn round the globe, burn, as before so many shrines, to our glory!

But look at this matter in other lights; weigh it in all sorts of scales; see what we whalemen are, and have been.

Why did the Dutch in De Witt's time[5] have admirals of their whaling fleets? Why did Louis XVI. of France, at his own personal expense, fit out whaling ships from Dunkirk, and politely invite to that town some score or two of families from our own island of Nantucket? Why did Britain between the years 1750 and 1788 pay to her whalemen in bounties upwards of £1,000,000?[6] And lastly, how comes it that we whalemen of America now outnumber all the rest of the banded whalemen in the world; sail a navy of upwards of seven hundred vessels; manned by eighteen thousand men; yearly consuming 4,000,000 of dollars; the ships worth, at the time of sailing, $20,000,000; and every year importing into our harbors a well

2. The initials on the officers' calling cards would have been U.S.N.
3. Notion, idea.
4. Long, slender candles.
5. In the mid-17th century, under the Dutch statesman Jan de Witt (1625–1672).
6. Derived from Beale.

reaped harvest of $7,000,000. How comes all this, if there be not something puissant in whaling?[7]

But this is not the half; look again.

I freely assert, that the cosmopolite philosopher cannot, for his life, point out one single peaceful influence, which within the last sixty years has operated more potentially upon the whole broad world, taken in one aggregate, than the high and mighty business of whaling. One way and another, it has begotten events so remarkable in themselves, and so continuously momentous in their sequential issues, that whaling may well be regarded as that Egyptian mother, who bore offspring themselves pregnant from her womb.[8] It would be a hopeless, endless task to catalogue all these things. Let a handful suffice. For many years past the whale-ship has been the pioneer in ferreting out the remotest and least known parts of the earth. She has explored seas and archipelagoes which had no chart, where no Cook or Vancouver[9] had ever sailed. If American and European men-of-war now peacefully ride in once savage harbors, let them fire salutes to the honor and the glory of the whale-ship, which originally showed them the way, and first interpreted between them and the savages. They may celebrate as they will the heroes of Exploring Expeditions,[1] your Cooks, your Krusensterns;[2] but I say that scores of anonymous Captains have sailed out of Nantucket, that were as great, and greater than your Cook and your Krusenstern. For in their succorless empty-handeness, they, in the heathenish sharked waters, and by the beaches of unrecorded, javelin islands, battled with virgin wonders and terrors that Cook with all his marines and muskets would not willingly have dared. All that is made such a flourish of in the old South Sea Voyages, those things were but the life-time commonplaces of our heroic Nantucketers.[3] Often, adventures which Vancouver dedicates three chapters to, these men accounted unworthy of being set down in the ship's common log. Ah, the world! Oh, the world!

Until the whale fishery rounded Cape Horn, no commerce but colonial, scarcely any intercourse but colonial, was carried on between Europe and the long line of the opulent Spanish provinces on the Pacific coast. It was the whaleman who first broke through the jealous policy of the Spanish crown, touching those colonies; and, if space permitted, it might be distinctly shown how from those whalemen at last eventuated the liberation of Peru, Chili, and Bolivia from the yoke of Old Spain, and the establishment of the eternal democracy in those parts.[4]

7. Derived from Browne.
8. Melville slightly misstates: Nut in Egyptian mythology is the mother of Osiris and his twin sister, Isis, whom he impregnated while in Nut's womb.
9. James Cook (1728–1779) and George Vancouver (1757–1798) were the most famous British explorers of the Pacific.
1. The *Narrative of the United States Exploring Expedition* (1844) was the five-volume report of the 1838–42 American expedition to the Pacific and Antarctic under the command of Charles Wilkes, U.S.N. (1798–1877). Its lavish prose descriptions and its many quite remarkable engravings made it a standard authority on the Pacific.
2. Adam Ivan Krustenstern (1770–1846) was the first Russian circumnavigator of the globe.
3. Melville drew on reports of all these navigators, but here he has Ishmael oratorically belittle them, lawyer-fashion, in his role as champion of whalemen's achievements.
4. Melville knew that the independence won by Peru in 1824, Chile in 1828, and Bolivia in 1825 had not brought the untroubled establishment of "eternal democracy," the contemporary catchphrase that Ishmael vehemently holds to in this passage.

That great America on the other side of the sphere, Australia,[5] was given to the enlightened world by the whalemen. After its first blunder-born discovery by a Dutchman, all other ships long shunned those shores as pestiferously barbarous; but the whale-ship touched there. The whale-ship is the true mother of that now mighty colony. Moreover, in the infancy of the first Australian settlement, the emigrants were several times saved from starvation by the benevolent biscuit of the whale-ship luckily dropping an anchor in their waters. The uncounted isles of all Polynesia[6] confess the same truth, and do commercial homage to the whale-ship, that cleared the way for the missionary and the merchant, and in many cases carried the primitive missionaries to their first destinations. If that double-bolted land, Japan, is ever to become hospitable, it is the whale-ship alone to whom the credit will be due; for already she is on the threshold.

But if, in the face of all this, you still declare that whaling has no æsthetically noble associations connected with it, then am I ready to shiver fifty lances with you there, and unhorse you with a split helmet every time.

The whale has no famous author, and whaling no famous chronicler, you will say.

The whale no famous author, and whaling no famous chronicler? Who wrote the first account of our Leviathan? Who but mighty Job! And who composed the first narrative of a whaling-voyage? Who, but no less a prince than Alfred the Great,[7] who, with his own royal pen, took down the words from Other, the Norwegian whale-hunter of those times! And who pronounced our glowing eulogy in Parliament? Who, but Edmund Burke![8]

True enough, but then whalemen themselves are poor devils; they have no good blood in their veins.

No good blood in their veins? They have something better than royal blood there. The grandmother of Benjamin Franklin was Mary Morrel; afterwards, by marriage, Mary Folger,[9] one of the old settlers of Nantucket, and the ancestress to a long line of Folgers and harpooners—all kith and kin to noble Benjamin—this day darting the barbed iron from one side of the world to the other.

Good again; but then all confess that somehow whaling is not respectable.

Whaling not respectable? Whaling is imperial! By old English statutory law, the whale is declared "a royal fish."[1]

Oh, that's only nominal! The whale himself has never figured in any grand imposing way.

The whale never figured in any grand imposing way? In one of the mighty triumphs given to a Roman general upon his entering the world's capital,

5. Although sighted earlier, it was first visited by the Dutch in 1606 and was settled in 1788 by England as a penal colony, to reduce the cost of the British prison system.
6. The central Pacific islands were visited by English before American whaleships, as were Japanese waters from 1778 on. Here, Ishmael as advocate pushes the priority of American whalemen.
7. From Browne (1846), Melville took the reference to the Anglo-Saxon King Alfred (849–899).
8. In Browne or in Beale (1839) Melville found the passage from Edmund Burke's speech "Conciliation with the American Colonies," which he quoted in "Extracts."
9. Wife of Peter Folger (1618–1690). Her daughter Abiah was the second wife of Josiah Franklin of Boston, whose tenth son was Benjamin Franklin (1706–1790). Melville apparently did not know that through his Greenleaf grandmother he was himself "kith and kin to noble Benjamin."
1. See subsequent chapters for something more on this head. [Melville's note.] See Ch. 90.

the bones of a whale, brought all the way from the Syrian coast, were the most conspicuous object in the cymballed procession.[2]

Grant it, since you cite it; but, say what you will, there is no real dignity in whaling.

No dignity in whaling? The dignity of our calling the very heavens attest. Cetus[3] is a constellation in the South! No more! Drive down your hat in presence of the Czar, and take it off to Queequeg! No more! I know a man that, in his lifetime, has taken three hundred and fifty whales. I account that man more honorable than that great captain of antiquity who boasted of taking as many walled towns.[4]

And, as for me, if, by any possibility, there be any as yet undiscovered prime thing in me; if I shall ever deserve any real repute in that small but high hushed world which I might not be unreasonably ambitious of; if hereafter I shall do anything that, upon the whole, a man might rather have done than to have left undone; if, at my death, my executors, or more properly my creditors, find any precious MSS. in my desk, then here I prospectively ascribe all the honor and the glory to whaling; for a whale-ship was my Yale College and my Harvard.[5]

CHAPTER 25

Postscript[1]

In behalf of the dignity of whaling, I would fain advance naught but substantiated facts. But after embattling his facts, an advocate who should wholly suppress a not unreasonable surmise, which might tell eloquently upon his cause—such an advocate, would he not be blameworthy?

It is well known that at the coronation of kings and queens, even modern ones, a certain curious process of seasoning them for their functions is gone through. There is a saltcellar of state, so called, and there may be a caster of state. How they use the salt, precisely—who knows? Certain I am, however, that a king's head is solemnly oiled at his coronation, even as a head of salad. Can it be, though, that they anoint it with a view of making its interior run well, as they anoint machinery? Much might be ruminated here, concerning the essential dignity of this regal process, because in common life we esteem but meanly and contemptibly a fellow who anoints his hair, and palpably smells of that anointing. In truth, a mature man who uses hair-oil, unless medicinally, that man has probably got a quoggy[2] spot in him somewhere. As a general rule, he can't amount to much in his totality.

But the only thing to be considered here, is this—what kind of oil is used at coronations? Certainly it cannot be olive oil, nor macassar oil, nor castor oil, nor bear's oil, nor train oil, nor cod-liver oil.[3] What then can it

2. Here, the relevant chapter is 82; Melville read of this procession in Kitto (1846).
3. In the Southern Hemisphere, one of the largest constellations, prominent in equinoctial skies in the fall.
4. Possibly Demetrius Poliorcetes, a Macedonian king told of in Plutarch's *Lives*.
5. Ishmael speaks also for Melville, whose schooling after the age of twelve was intermittent and never at college level. "MSS.": manuscripts.

1. The first English edition solved the problem of the disrespect toward royalty shown here by omitting the entire little chapter.
2. Mushy, boggy.
3. The first three oils are from plants; train oil is from right whales and cod-liver oil from codfish.

possibly be, but sperm oil in its unmanufactured, unpolluted state, the sweetest of all oils?

Think of that, ye loyal Britons! we whalemen supply your kings and queens with coronation stuff!

CHAPTER 26

KNIGHTS AND SQUIRES

The chief mate of the Pequod was Starbuck,[1] a native of Nantucket, and a Quaker by descent. He was a long, earnest man, and though born on an icy coast, seemed well adapted to endure hot latitudes, his flesh being hard as twice-baked biscuit. Transported to the Indies, his live blood would not spoil like bottled ale. He must have been born in some time of general drought and famine, or upon one of those fast days[2] for which his state is famous. Only some thirty arid summers had he seen; those summers had dried up all his physical superfluousness. But this, his thinness, so to speak, seemed no more the token of wasting anxieties and cares, than it seemed the indication of any bodily blight. It was merely the condensation of the man. He was by no means ill-looking; quite the contrary. His pure tight skin was an excellent fit; and closely wrapped up in it, and embalmed with inner health and strength, like a revivified Egyptian,[3] this Starbuck seemed prepared to endure for long ages to come, and to endure always, as now; for be it Polar snow or torrid sun, like a patent chronometer,[4] his interior vitality was warranted to do well in all climates. Looking into his eyes, you seemed to see there the yet lingering images of those thousand-fold perils he had calmly confronted through life. A staid, steadfast man, whose life for the most part was a telling pantomime of action, and not a tame chapter of sounds. Yet, for all his hardy sobriety and fortitude, there were certain qualities in him which at times affected, and in some cases seemed well nigh to overbalance all the rest. Uncommonly conscientious for a seaman, and endued with a deep natural reverence, the wild watery loneliness of his life did therefore strongly incline him to superstition; but to that sort of superstition, which in some organizations seems rather to spring, somehow, from intelligence than from ignorance. Outward portents and inward presentiments were his. And if at times these things bent the welded iron of his soul, much more did his far-away domestic memories of his young Cape wife and child, tend to bend him still more from the original ruggedness of his nature, and open him still further to those latent influences which, in some honest-hearted men, restrain the gush of dare-devil daring, so often evinced by others in the more perilous vicissitudes of the fishery. "I will have no man in my boat," said Starbuck, "who is not afraid of a whale." By this, he seemed to mean, not only that the most reliable and useful courage is that which arises from

1. An old Nantucket family name.
2. In the 19th century, Massachusetts still proclaimed an annual Fast Day, as it had done since colonial times.
3. A mummy brought back to life—possibly suggested by Poe's "Some Words with a Mummy" (1845), in which a mummy is revivified by electric shock.
4. A very accurate weatherproof clock. A ship's longitudinal position at sea could be determined by calculations using the difference between the Greenwich time shown on its chronometer and local time.

the fair estimation of the encountered peril, but that an utterly fearless man is a far more dangerous comrade than a coward.

"Aye, aye," said Stubb, the second mate, "Starbuck, there, is as careful a man as you'll find anywhere in this fishery." But we shall ere long see what that word "careful" precisely means when used by a man like Stubb, or almost any other whale hunter.

Starbuck was no crusader after perils; in him courage was not a sentiment; but a thing simply useful to him, and always at hand upon all mortally practical occasions. Besides, he thought, perhaps, that in this business of whaling, courage was one of the great staple outfits of the ship, like her beef and her bread, and not to be foolishly wasted. Wherefore he had no fancy for lowering for whales after sun-down; nor for persisting in fighting a fish that too much persisted in fighting him. For, thought Starbuck, I am here in this critical ocean to kill whales for my living, and not to be killed by them for theirs; and that hundreds of men had been so killed Starbuck well knew. What doom was his own father's? Where, in the bottomless deeps, could he find the torn limbs of his brother?

With memories like these in him, and, moreover, given to a certain superstitiousness, as has been said; the courage of this Starbuck which could, nevertheless, still flourish, must indeed have been extreme. But it was not in reasonable nature that a man so organized, and with such terrible experiences and remembrances as he had; it was not in nature that these things should fail in latently engendering an element in him, which, under suitable circumstances, would break out from its confinement, and burn all his courage up. And brave as he might be, it was that sort of bravery, chiefly visible[5] in some intrepid men, which, while generally abiding firm in the conflict with seas, or winds, or whales, or any of the ordinary irrational horrors of the world, yet cannot withstand those more terrific, because more spiritual terrors, which sometimes menace you from the concentrating brow of an enraged and mighty man.

But were the coming narrative to reveal, in any instance, the complete abasement of poor Starbuck's fortitude, scarce might I have the heart to write it; for it is a thing most sorrowful, nay shocking, to expose the fall of valor in the soul. Men may seem detestable as joint stock-companies and nations; knaves, fools, and murderers there may be; men may have mean and meagre faces; but man, in the ideal, is so noble and so sparkling, such a grand and glowing creature, that over any ignominious blemish in him all his fellows should run to throw their costliest robes. That immaculate manliness we feel within ourselves, so far within us, that it remains intact though all the outer character seem gone; bleeds with keenest anguish at the undraped spectacle of a valor-ruined man. Nor can piety itself, at such a shameful sight, completely stifle her upbraidings against the permitting stars. But this august dignity I treat of, is not the dignity of kings and robes, but that abounding dignity which has no robed investiture. Thou shalt see it shining in the arm that wields a pick or drives a spike; that democratic dignity which, on all hands, radiates without end from God; Himself! The great God absolute! The centre and circumference of all democracy! His omnipresence, our divine equality!

5. The first edition reads: "it was that sort of bravery chiefly, visible in some intrepid men." Here the comma is moved to follow "bravery" so it is clear that "chiefly" modifies visible.

If, then, to meanest mariners, and renegades and castaways, I shall hereafter ascribe high qualities, though dark; weave round them tragic graces; if even the most mournful, perchance the most abased, among them all, shall at times lift himself to the exalted mounts; if I shall touch that workman's arm with some ethereal light; if I shall spread a rainbow over his disastrous set of sun; then against all mortal critics[6] bear me out in it, thou just Spirit of Equality, which hast spread one royal mantle of humanity over all my kind! Bear me out in it, thou great democratic God! who didst not refuse to the swart convict, Bunyan,[7] the pale, poetic pearl; Thou who didst clothe with doubly hammered leaves of finest gold, the stumped and paupered arm of old Cervantes;[8] Thou who didst pick up Andrew Jackson[9] from the pebbles; who didst hurl him upon a war-horse; who didst thunder him higher than a throne! Thou who, in all Thy mighty earthly marchings, ever cullest Thy selectest champions from the kingly commons; bear me out in it, O God![1]

CHAPTER 27

KNIGHTS AND SQUIRES

Stubb[1] was the second mate. He was a native of Cape Cod; and hence, according to local usage, was called a Cape-Cod-man. A happy-go-lucky; neither craven nor valiant; taking perils as they came with an indifferent

6. In this remarkable paragraph, Melville, or his narrator Ishmael, claims the privilege of weaving tragic graces around ordinary workingmen, despite whatever objections any earthly critics might raise; he was remembering one specific "mortal critic," the reviewer of *White-Jacket* in the New York *Albion* (March 30, 1850), who had jeered at Melville's celebrating the "essential dignity of man" and American "democratic institutions," and demanded: "Is it consistent with the 'essential dignity,' that one man should sweep the floor of Congress, and another make laws upon it which his democratic countrymen must obey?" The primary aesthetic challenge for Melville is how an American could write a book as tragic as the greatest dramas of Shakespeare.
7. John Bunyan (1628–1688), while a convict because of his Dissenter activities, wrote *The Pilgrim's Progress* (1678), still enormously influential among Protestants in Melville's time, particularly beloved by his friend Nathaniel Hawthorne and by Louisa May Alcott.
8. From Laurence Sterne's *Tristram Shandy* (1760–65). Melville is recalling the passage in which the spirit of sweetest humor is said to have cast its "mystic mantle" over the "withered stump" of the maimed left hand of Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra (1547–1616), author of *Don Quixote* (1605, 1615). Cervantes was impoverished, but his left arm was merely disabled, not "stumped."
9. Andrew Jackson (1767–1845), despite extreme poverty in childhood, rose to become a military hero and the first common-man president (1829–37), during Melville's own impoverished childhood. For Americans of Melville's time, Jackson's victory against the British at New Orleans in January 1815 was a battle that defined their national identity, no matter that it turned out to have been fought when news of peace was already on its way across the Atlantic.
1. This passage is infused with Melville's memories of his return from the Pacific just before the election of 1844, when he witnessed "mighty earthly marchings," one of New York City's greatest torchlight processions just before the 1844 election, where one of the parading heroes was his older brother Gansevoort, a Democratic orator, who in August 1844 had been the guest of Andrew Jackson at his Hermitage outside Nashville. Herman Melville heard his brother celebrate Jackson in an election-eve speech in Newark, New Jersey, in November 1844 as the great Democrat and the embodiment of social democracy: "I have seen men clad in linsey-woolsey garments, and with unshod feet, setting in Colonel Polk's parlor, and at the table of Andrew Jackson." (James K. Polk was elected on a promise to annex Texas.) Melville's ambitions as a writer were fired by the collision in his imagination of his brother's new fame and prestige and his own recent insignificance as a whaleman and an ordinary seaman. In *White-Jacket* (1850), the book he wrote just before *Moby-Dick*, he contrasts his status as an ordinary seaman in the navy (compelled to witness dozens of brutal floggings and subject to flogging himself) with, first, his later status ashore at a ball in Washington, when he could speak to the commander man to man (Ch. 69) and, second (Ch. 70), with the freedom of his own brother to call on a president (or at least on two former presidents and a president-to-be).
1. The name may have been chosen to fit the physique, but Flask (not Stubb) is given a "short, stout" stature and called "King-Post."

air; and while engaged in the most imminent crisis of the chase, toiling away, calm and collected as a journeyman joiner[2] engaged for the year. Good-humored, easy, and careless, he presided over his whale-boat as if the most deadly encounter were but a dinner, and his crew all invited guests. He was as particular about the comfortable arrangement of his part of the boat, as an old stage-driver is about the snugness of his box. When close to the whale, in the very death-lock of the fight, he handled his unpitying lance coolly and off-handedly, as a whistling tinker his hammer. He would hum over his old rigadig tunes while flank and flank with the most exasperated monster. Long usage had, for this Stubb, converted the jaws of death into an easy chair. What he thought of death itself, there is no telling. Whether he ever thought of it at all, might be a question; but, if he ever did chance to cast his mind that way after a comfortable dinner, no doubt, like a good sailor, he took it to be a sort of call of the watch to tumble aloft, and bestir themselves there, about something which he would find out when he obeyed the order, and not sooner.

What, perhaps, with other things, made Stubb such an easygoing, unfearing man, so cheerily trudging off with the burden of life in a world full of grave peddlers, all bowed to the ground with their packs; what helped to bring about that almost impious good-humor of his; that thing must have been his pipe. For, like his nose, his short, black little pipe was one of the regular features of his face. You would almost as soon have expected him to turn out of his bunk without his nose as without his pipe. He kept a whole row of pipes there ready loaded, stuck in a rack, within easy reach of his hand; and, whenever he turned in, he smoked them all out in succession, lighting one from the other to the end of the chapter; then loading them again to be in readiness anew. For, when Stubb dressed, instead of first putting his legs into his trowsers, he put his pipe into his mouth.

I say this continual smoking must have been one cause, at least, of his peculiar disposition; for every one knows that this earthly air, whether ashore or afloat, is terribly infected with the nameless miseries of the numberless mortals who have died exhaling it; and as in time of the cholera, some people go about with a camphorated handkerchief to their mouths; so, likewise, against all mortal tribulations, Stubb's tobacco smoke might have operated as a sort of disinfecting agent.

The third mate was Flask, a native of Tisbury, in Martha's Vineyard. A short, stout, ruddy young fellow, very pugnacious concerning whales, who somehow seemed to think that the great Leviathans had personally and hereditarily affronted him; and therefore it was a sort of point of honor with him, to destroy them whenever encountered. So utterly lost was he to all sense of reverence for the many marvels of their majestic bulk and mystic ways; and so dead to anything like an apprehension of any possible danger from encountering them; that in his poor opinion, the wondrous whale was but a species of magnified mouse, or at least water-rat, requiring only a little circumvention and some small application of time and trouble in order to kill and boil. This ignorant, unconscious fearlessness of his made him a little waggish in the matter of whales; he followed these fish for the fun of it; and a three years' voyage round Cape Horn was only a jolly joke that lasted that length of time. As a carpenter's nails are divided

2. A competent, but not yet master, carpenter.

into wrought nails and cut nails;[3] so mankind may be similarly divided. Little Flask was one of the wrought ones; made to clinch tight and last long. They called him King-Post on board of the Pequod; because, in form, he could be well likened to the short, square timber known by that name in Arctic whalers; and which by the means of many radiating side timbers inserted into it, serves to brace the ship against the icy concussions of those battering seas.

Now these three mates—Starbuck, Stubb, and Flask, were momentous men. They it was who by universal prescription commanded three of the Pequod's boats as headsmen. In that grand order of battle in which Captain Ahab would presently marshal his forces to descend on the whales, these three headsmen were as captains of companies. Or, being armed with their long keen whaling spears, they were as a picked trio of lancers; even as the harpooneers were flingers of javelins.

And since in this famous fishery, each mate or headsman, like a Gothic Knight of old, is always accompanied by his boat-steerer or harpooneer, who in certain conjunctures provides him with a fresh lance, when the former one has been badly twisted, or elbowed in the assault; and moreover, as there generally subsists between the two, a close intimacy and friendliness; it is therefore but meet, that in this place we set down who the Pequod's harpooneers were, and to what headsman each of them belonged.

First of all was Queequeg, whom Starbuck, the chief mate, had selected for his squire. But Queequeg is already known.

Next was Tashtego, an unmixed Indian from Gay Head, the most westerly promontory of Martha's Vineyard, where there still exists the last remnant of a village of red men, which has long supplied the neighboring island of Nantucket with many of her most daring harpooneers. In the fishery, they usually go by the generic name of Gay-Headers. Tashtego's long, lean, sable hair, his high cheek bones, and black rounding eyes—for an Indian, Oriental in their largeness,[4] but Antarctic in their glittering expression—all this sufficiently proclaimed him an inheritor of the unvitiated blood of those proud warrior hunters, who, in quest of the great New England moose, had scoured, bow in hand, the aboriginal forests of the main.[5] But no longer snuffing in the trail of the wild beasts of the woodland, Tashtego now hunted in the wake of the great whales of the sea; the unerring harpoon of the son fitly replacing the infallible arrow of the sires. To look at the tawny brawn of his lithe snaky limbs, you would almost have credited the superstitions of some of the earlier Puritans, and half believed this wild Indian to be a son of the Prince of the Powers of the Air.[6] Tashtego was Stubb the second mate's squire.

Third among the harpooneers was Daggoo, a gigantic, coal-black negro-savage, with a lion-like tread—an Ahasuerus[7] to behold. Suspended from

3. Made by hand of forged iron versus being cut from a strip by a machine.
4. Eyes large and round, more like those of someone from India than of an American Indian.
5. I.e., mainland.
6. The devil, as in Ephesians 2.2: "the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience."
7. In Esther 1.1, the Persian king who marries Esther and spares the Jews. Melville attributes to him a size commensurate with his kingdom, which stretched from India to Ethiopia.

his ears were two golden hoops, so large that the sailors called them ringbolts,[8] and would talk of securing the top-sail halyards to them. In his youth Daggoo had voluntarily shipped on board of a whaler, lying in a lonely bay on his native coast. And never having been anywhere in the world but in Africa, Nantucket, and the pagan harbors most frequented by whalemen; and having now led for many years the bold life of the fishery in the ships of owners uncommonly heedful of what manner of men they shipped; Daggoo retained all his barbaric virtues, and erect as a giraffe, moved about the decks in all the pomp of six feet five in his socks. There was a corporeal humility in looking up at him; and a white man standing before him seemed a white flag come to beg truce of a fortress. Curious to tell, this imperial negro, Ahasuerus Daggoo, was the Squire of little Flask, who looked like a chess-man beside him. As for the residue of the Pequod's company, be it said, that at the present day not one in two of the many thousand men before the mast employed in the American whale fishery, are Americans born, though pretty nearly all the officers are. Herein it is the same with the American whale fishery as with the American army and military and merchant navies, and the engineering forces employed in the construction of the American Canals and Railroads. The same, I say, because in all these cases the native American liberally provides the brains, the rest of the world as generously supplying the muscles. No small number of these whaling seamen belong to the Azores,[9] where the outward bound Nantucket whalers frequently touch to augment their crews from the hardy peasants of those rocky shores. In like manner, the Greenland whalers sailing out of Hull or London, put in at the Shetland Islands,[1] to receive the full complement of their crew. Upon the passage homewards, they drop them there again. How it is, there is no telling, but Islanders seem to make the best whalemen. They were nearly all Islanders in the Pequod, *Isolatoes* too, I call such, not acknowledging the common continent of men, but each *Isolato*[2] living on a separate continent of his own. Yet now, federated along one keel, what a set these Isolatoes were! An Anacharsis Clootz deputation[3] from all the isles of the sea, and all the ends of the earth, accompanying Old Ahab in the Pequod to lay the world's grievances before that bar from which not very many of them ever came back. Black Little Pip—he never did! Poor Alabama boy![4] On the grim Pequod's forecastle, ye shall ere long see him, beating his tambourine; prelusive of the eternal time, when sent for, to the great quarter-deck on high, he was bid strike in with angels, and beat his tambourine in glory; called a coward here, hailed a hero there!

8. Large iron rings bolted in the deck, to which rope could be fastened.
9. A group of nine islands in the north Atlantic belonging to Portugal.
1. A group of islands lying about 130 miles north of the Scottish mainland.
2. Apparently a word invented by Melville to play on *isolated* and *island*.
3. Composed of different nations and races, like the motley deputation that the Prussian Baron de Cloots (1755–1794) led into the French National Assembly in 1790 to symbolize worldwide support of the French Revolution. Melville read about him in Thomas Carlyle's *French Revolution* (1837) 2.1.10.
4. Here, the American edition ("he never did—oh, no! he went before. Poor Alabama boy!") may reflect an early plan to have Pip die, perhaps when cast away. Presumably Melville revised this on the proofs that went to London.

CHAPTER 28

AHAB

For several days after leaving Nantucket, nothing above hatches was seen of Captain Ahab. The mates regularly relieved each other at the watches, and for aught that could be seen to the contrary, they seemed to be the only commanders of the ship; only they sometimes issued from the cabin with orders so sudden and peremptory, that after all it was plain they but commanded vicariously. Yes, their supreme lord and dictator was there, though hitherto unseen by any eyes not permitted to penetrate into the now sacred retreat of the cabin.

Every time I ascended to the deck from my watches below, I instantly gazed aft to mark if any strange face were visible; for my first vague disquietude touching the unknown captain, now in the seclusion of the sea, became almost a perturbation. This was strangely heightened at times by the ragged Elijah's diabolical incoherences uninvitedly recurring to me, with a subtle energy I could not have before conceived of. But poorly could I withstand them, much as in other moods I was almost ready to smile at the solemn whimsicalities of that outlandish prophet of the wharves. But whatever it was of apprehensiveness or uneasiness—to call it so—which I felt, yet whenever I came to look about me in the ship, it seemed against all warrantry to cherish such emotions. For though the harpooneers, with the great body of the crew, were a far more barbaric, heathenish, and motley set than any of the tame merchant-ship companies which my previous experiences had made me acquainted with, still I ascribed this—and rightly ascribed it—to the fierce uniqueness of the very nature of that wild Scandinavian vocation in which I had so abandonedly embarked. But it was especially the aspect of the three chief officers of the ship, the mates, which was most forcibly calculated to allay these colorless misgivings, and induce confidence and cheerfulness in every presentment of the voyage. Three better, more likely sea-officers and men, each in his own different way, could not readily be found, and they were every one of them Americans; a Nantucketer, a Vineyarder, a Cape man. Now, it being Christmas when the ship shot from out her harbor, for a space we had biting Polar weather, though all the time running away from it to the southward; and by every degree and minute of latitude which we sailed, gradually leaving that merciless winter, and all its intolerable weather behind us. It was one of those less lowering, but still grey and gloomy enough mornings of the transition, when with a fair wind the ship was rushing through the water with a vindictive sort of leaping and melancholy rapidity, that as I mounted to the deck at the call of the forenoon watch, so soon as I levelled my glance towards the taffrail,[1] foreboding shivers ran over me. Reality outran apprehension; Captain Ahab stood upon his quarter-deck.

There seemed no sign of common bodily illness about him, nor of the recovery from any. He looked like a man cut away from the stake, when the fire has overrunningly wasted all the limbs without consuming them, or taking away one particle from their compacted aged robustness. His whole high, broad form, seemed made of solid bronze, and shaped in an unalterable

1. Railing at the ship's stern, at the back end of the quarterdeck (which begins at the mainmast).

mould, like Cellini's cast Perseus.[2] Threading its way out from among his grey hairs, and continuing right down one side of his tawny scorched face and neck, till it disappeared in his clothing, you saw a slender rod-like mark, lividly whitish. It resembled that perpendicular seam sometimes made in the straight, lofty trunk of a great tree, when the upper lightning tearingly darts down it, and without wrenching a single twig, peels and grooves out the bark from top to bottom, ere running off into the soil, leaving the tree still greenly alive, but branded. Whether that mark was born with him, or whether it was the scar left by some desperate wound, no one could certainly say. By some tacit consent, throughout the voyage little or no allusion was made to it, especially by the mates. But once Tashtego's senior, an old Gay-Head Indian among the crew, superstitiously asserted that not till he was full forty years old did Ahab become that way branded, and then it came upon him, not in the fury of any mortal fray, but in an elemental strife at sea. Yet, this wild hint seemed inferentially negatived, by what a grey Manxman[3] insinuated, an old sepulchral man, who, having never before sailed out of Nantucket, had never ere this laid eye upon wild Ahab. Nevertheless, the old sea-traditions, the immemorial credulities, popularly invested this old Manxman with preternatural powers of discernment. So that no white sailor seriously contradicted him when he said that if ever Captain Ahab should be tranquilly laid out—which might hardly come to pass, so he muttered—then, whoever should do that last office for the dead, would find a birth-mark on him from crown to sole.

So powerfully did the whole grim aspect of Ahab affect me, and the livid brand which streaked it, that for the first few moments I hardly noted that not a little of this overbearing grimness was owing to the barbaric white leg upon which he partly stood. It had previously come to me that this ivory leg had at sea been fashioned from the polished bone of the sperm whale's jaw. "Aye, he was dismasted off Japan," said the old Gay-Head Indian once; "but like his dismasted craft, he shipped another mast without coming home for it. He has a quiver of 'em."

I was struck with the singular posture he maintained. Upon each side of the Pequod's quarter deck, and pretty close to the mizen shrouds,[4] there was an auger hole, bored about half an inch or so, into the plank. His bone leg steadied in that hole; one arm elevated, and holding by a shroud; Captain Ahab stood erect, looking straight out beyond the ship's ever-pitching prow. There was an infinity of firmest fortitude, a determinate, unsurrenderable wilfulness, in the fixed and fearless, forward dedication of that glance. Not a word he spoke; nor did his officers say aught to him; though by all their minutest gestures and expressions, they plainly showed the uneasy, if not painful, consciousness of being under a troubled master-eye. And not only that, but moody stricken Ahab stood before them with a crucifixion in his face; in all the nameless regal overbearing dignity of some mighty woe.

2. From engravings, Melville knew the bronze statue by the Italian sculptor Benevenuto Cellini (1500–1571) in the Loggia of the Signoria in Florence. The triumphant Perseus holds aloft the newly severed head of Medusa, one of the snake-haired Gorgons whose eyes turned anyone who looked into them into stone.
3. Native of the Isle of Man, in the Irish Sea, but affording an irresistable pun on the isle of mankind, the human condition.
4. Ropes at the bulwarks supporting the mast farthest aft.

Ere long, from his first visit in the air, he withdrew into his cabin. But after that morning, he was every day visible to the crew; either standing in his pivot-hole, or seated upon an ivory stool he had; or heavily walking the deck. As the sky grew less gloomy; indeed, began to grow a little genial, he became still less and less a recluse; as if, when the ship had sailed from home, nothing but the dead wintry bleakness of the sea had then kept him so secluded. And, by and by, it came to pass, that he was almost continually in the air; but, as yet, for all that he said, or perceptibly did, on the at last sunny deck, he seemed as unnecessary there as another mast. But the Pequod was only making a passage now; not regularly cruising; nearly all whaling preparatives needing supervision the mates were fully competent to, so that there was little or nothing, out of himself, to employ or excite Ahab, now; and thus chase away, for that one interval, the clouds that layer upon layer were piled upon his brow, as ever all clouds choose the loftiest peaks to pile themselves upon.

Nevertheless, ere long, the warm, warbling persuasiveness of the pleasant, holiday weather we came to, seemed gradually to charm him from his mood. For, as when the red-cheeked, dancing girls, April and May, trip home to the wintry, misanthropic woods; even the barest, ruggedest, most thunder-cloven old oak will at least send forth some few green sprouts, to welcome such glad-hearted visitants; so Ahab did, in the end, a little respond to the playfu1 allurings of that girlish air. More than once did he put forth the faint blossom of a look, which, in any other man, would have soon flowered out in a smile.

CHAPTER 29

ENTER AHAB; TO HIM, STUBB[1]

Some days elapsed, and ice and icebergs all astern, the Pequod now went rolling through the bright Quito spring,[2] which, at sea, almost perpetually reigns on the threshold of the eternal August of the Tropic. The warmly cool, clear, ringing, perfumed, overflowing, redundant days, were as crystal goblets of Persian sherbet,[3] heaped up—flaked up, with rose-water snow. The starred and stately nights seemed haughty dames in jewelled velvets, nursing at home in lonely pride, the memory of their absent conquering Earls, the golden helmeted suns! For sleeping man, 'twas hard to choose between such winsome days and such seducing nights. But all the witcheries of that unwaning weather did not merely lend new spells and potencies to the outward world. Inward they turned upon the soul, especially when the still mild hours of eve came on; then, memory shot her crystals as the clear ice most forms of noiseless twilights. And all these subtle agencies, more and more they wrought on Ahab's texture.

Old age is always wakeful; as if, the longer linked with life, the less man has to do with aught that looks like death. Among sea-commanders, the old greybeards will oftenest leave their berths to visit the night-cloaked

1. A stage direction; the first of the book's use of the form and language of plays, in accordance with Ishmael's strategy of presenting Ahab as a tragic hero whose greatness he, as dramatist to some extent, discovers and even creates (as he says at the end of Ch. 33).
2. Invariable weather associated with Quito, Ecuador (named for being on the equator).
3. In Asian stories, a dessert topped with perfumed mountain snow.

deck. It was so with Ahab; only that now, of late, he seemed so much to live in the open air, that truly speaking, his visits were more to the cabin, than from the cabin to the planks. "It feels like going down into one's tomb,"—he would mutter to himself,—"for an old captain like me to be descending this narrow scuttle, to go to my grave-dug berth."

So, almost every twenty-four hours, when the watches of the night were set, and the band on deck sentinelled the slumbers of the band below; and when if a rope was to be hauled upon the forecastle, the sailors flung it not rudely down, as by day, but with some cautiousness dropt it to its place, for fear of disturbing their slumbering shipmates; when this sort of steady quietude would begin to prevail, habitually, the silent steersman would watch the cabin-scuttle; and ere long the old man would emerge, griping[4] at the iron banister, to help his crippled way. Some considerating touch of humanity was in him; for at times like these, he usually abstained from patrolling the quarter-deck; because to his wearied mates, seeking repose within six inches of his ivory heel, such would have been the reverberating crack and din of that bony step, that their dreams would have been of the crunching teeth of sharks. But once, the mood was on him too deep for common regardings; and as with heavy, lumber-like[5] pace he was measuring the ship from taffrail to mainmast, Stubb, the odd second mate, came up from below, and with a certain unassured, deprecating humorousness, hinted that if Captain Ahab was pleased to walk the planks, then, no one could say nay; but there might be some way of muffling the noise; hinting something indistinctly and hesitatingly about a globe of tow,[6] and the insertion into it, of the ivory heel. Ah! Stubb, thou did'st not know Ahab then.

"Am I a cannon-ball, Stubb," said Ahab, "that thou wouldst wad me that fashion? But go thy ways; I had forgot. Below to thy nightly grave; where such as ye sleep between shrouds,[7] to use ye to the filling one at last.—Down, dog, and kennel!"[8]

Starting at the unforeseen concluding exclamation of the so suddenly scornful old man, Stubb was speechless a moment; then said excitedly, "I am not used to be spoken to that way, sir; I do but less than half like it, sir."

"Avast!" gritted Ahab between his set teeth, and violently moving away, as if to avoid some passionate temptation.

"No, sir; not yet," said Stubb, emboldened, "I will not tamely be called a dog, sir."

"Then be called ten times a donkey, and a mule, and an ass, and begone, or I'll clear the world of thee!"

As he said this, Ahab advanced upon him with such overbearing terrors in his aspect, that Stubb involuntarily retreated.

"I was never served so before without giving a hard blow for it," muttered Stubb, as he found himself descending the cabin-scuttle. "It's very queer. Stop, Stubb; somehow, now, I don't well know whether to go back and strike him, or—what's that?—down here on my knees and pray for him? Yes, that was the thought coming up in me; but it would be the first

4. Usually used to describe painful stomach cramps and not commonly used for *grasping*, as it seems to be here.
5. Lumbering, lurching.
6. Tight little ball of rope yarn, which Ahab punningly takes to mean the wadding thrust down the muzzle of a cannon.
7. Ahab compares Stubb's bedsheets to the cerements ("shrouds") of a corpse.
8. *King Lear* 1.4.115: "Truth's a dog must to kennel."

time I ever *did* pray. It's queer;[9] very queer; and he's queer too; aye, take him fore and aft, he's about the queerest old man Stubb ever sailed with. How he flashed at me!—his eyes like powder-pans! is he mad? Anyway there's something on his mind, as sure as there must be something on a deck when it cracks. He aint in his bed now, either, more than three hours out of the twenty-four; and he don't sleep then. Didn't that Dough-Boy,[1] the steward, tell me that of a morning he always finds the old man's hammock clothes all rumpled and tumbled, and the sheets down at the foot, and the coverlid almost tied into knots, and the pillow a sort of frightful hot, as though a baked brick had been on it? A hot old man! I guess he's got what some folks ashore call a conscience; it's a kind of Tic-Dolly-row[2] they say—worse nor a toothache. Well, well; I don't know what it is, but the Lord keep me from catching it. He's full of riddles; I wonder what he goes into the after hold for, every night, as Dough-Boy tells me he suspects; what's that for, I should like to know? Who's made appointments with him in the hold? Ain't that queer, now? But there's no telling, it's the old game—Here goes for a snooze. Damn me, it's worth a fellow's while to be born into the world, if only to fall right asleep. And now that I think of it, that's about the first thing babies do, and that's a sort of queer, too. Damn me, but all things are queer, come to think of 'em. But that's against my principles. Think not, is my eleventh commandment;[3] and sleep when you can, is my twelfth—So here goes again. But how's that? didn't he call me a dog? blazes! he called me ten times a donkey, and piled a lot of jackasses on top of *that!* He might as well have kicked me, and done with it. Maybe he *did* kick me, and I didn't observe it, I was so taken all aback with his brow, somehow. It flashed like a bleached bone. What the devil's the matter with me? I don't stand right on my legs. Coming afoul[4] of that old man has a sort of turned me wrong side out. By the Lord, I must have been dreaming, though—How? how? how?—but the only way's to stash it; so here goes to hammock again; and in the morning, I'll see how this plaguey[5] juggling thinks over by daylight."

CHAPTER 30

THE PIPE

When Stubb had departed, Ahab stood for a while leaning over the bulwarks; and then, as had been usual with him of late, calling a sailor of the watch, he sent him below for his ivory stool, and also his pipe. Lighting the pipe at the binnacle lamp[1] and planting the stool on the weather side of the deck, he sat and smoked.

In old Norse times, the thrones of the sea-loving Danish kings were fabricated, saith tradition, of the tusks of the narwhale. How could one look

9. Puzzling, nearer the root sense of something oblique or athwart and therefore baffling (stronger than our sense of *odd*). The word recurs in the book, expressing its theme of the mystery of existence, whether the puzzler be the complex Ishmael or the simpler Stubb, as here.
1. A boiled dumpling, so an appropriate nickname for a food handler with a pale loaf-of-bread face such as he is said to possess (Ch. 34). Anyone interested in Melville's imagery involving dough should see *Omoo* (1847), Ch. 14.
2. From the French *tic douloureux*, a painful facial twitching.
3. I.e., next in solemnity after the biblical ten.
4. Nautical for becoming entangled with something, usually another vessel.
5. Treacherous trickery, like that of the "juggling fiends" of *Macbeth* 5.8.19.
1. Lighted compass box by the tiller.

at Ahab then, seated on that tripod of bones, without bethinking him of the royalty it symbolized? For a Khan[2] of the plank, and a king of the sea, and a great lord of Leviathans was Ahab.

Some moments passed, during which the thick vapor came from his mouth in quick and constant puffs, which blew back again into his face. "How now," he soliloquized at last, withdrawing the tube, "this smoking no longer soothes. Oh, my pipe! hard must it go with me if thy charm be gone! Here have I been unconsciously toiling, not pleasuring,—aye, and ignorantly smoking to windward all the while; to windward, and with such nervous whiffs, as if, like the dying whale, my final jets were the strongest and fullest of trouble. What business have I with this pipe? This thing that is meant for sereneness, to send up mild white vapors among mild white hairs, not among torn iron-grey locks like mine. I'll smoke no more—"

He tossed the still lighted pipe into the sea. The fire hissed in the waves; the same instant the ship shot by the bubble the sinking pipe made. With slouched hat, Ahab lurchingly paced the planks.

CHAPTER 31

Queen Mab[1]

Next morning Stubb accosted Flask.

"Such a queer dream, King-Post, I never had. You know the old man's ivory leg, well I dreamed he kicked me with it; and when I tried to kick back, upon my soul, my little man, I kicked my leg right off! And then, presto! Ahab seemed a pyramid, and I, like a blazing fool, kept kicking at it. But what was still more curious, Flask—you know how curious all dreams are—through all this rage that I was in, I somehow seemed to be thinking to myself, that after all, it was not much of an insult, that kick from Ahab. 'Why,' thinks I, 'what's the row? It's not a real leg, only a false leg.' And there's a mighty difference between a living thump and a dead thump. That's what makes a blow from the hand, Flask, fifty times more savage to bear than a blow from a cane. The living member—that makes the living insult, my little man. And thinks I to myself all the while, mind, while I was stubbing my silly toes against that cursed pyramid—so confoundedly contradictory was it all, all the while, I say, I was thinking to myself, 'what's his leg now, but a cane—a whalebone cane. Yes,' thinks I, 'it was only a playful cudgelling—in fact, only a whaleboning that he gave me—not a base kick. Besides,' thinks I, 'look at it once; why, the end of it—the foot part—what a small sort of end it is; whereas, if a broad footed farmer kicked me, *there's* a devilish broad insult. But this insult is whittled down to a point only.' But now comes the greatest joke of the dream, Flask. While I was battering away at the pyramid, a sort of badger-haired old merman, with a hump on his back, takes me by the shoulders, and slews me round. 'What are you 'bout?' says he. 'Slid![2] man, but I was frightened. Such a phiz! But, somehow, next moment I was over the fright. 'What am I about?' says I at last. 'And what business is that of yours, I

2. Absolute monarch, like a sovereign of Tartary.

1. The fairies' midwife who delivers dreams befitting each human sleeper, as in *Romeo and Juliet* 1.4.54. Mercutio says Queen Mab has been with Romeo, making him dream. The chapter title makes clear that she has been with Stubb.

2. I.e., God's lid (eyelid), an archaic oath, as in *Twelfth Night* 3.4.391.

should like to know, Mr. Humpback? Do *you* want a kick?' By the lord, Flask, I had no sooner said that, than he turned round his stern to me, bent over, and dragging up a lot of seaweed he had for a clout[3]—what do you think, I saw?—why thunder alive, man, his stern was stuck full of marlinspikes, with the points out. Says I, on second thoughts, 'I guess I won't kick you, old fellow.' 'Wise Stubb,' said he, 'wise Stubb;' and kept muttering it all the time, a sort of eating of his own gums like a chimney hag.[4] Seeing he wasn't going to stop saying over his 'wise Stubb, wise Stubb,' I thought I might as well fall to kicking the pyramid again. But I had only just lifted my foot for it, when he roared out, 'Stop that kicking!' 'Halloa,' says I, 'what's the matter now, old fellow?' 'Look ye here,' says he; 'let's argue the insult. Captain Ahab kicked ye, didn't he?' 'Yes, he did,' says I—'right *here* it was.' 'Very good,' says he—'he used his ivory leg, didn't he?' 'Yes, he did,' says I. 'Well then,' says he, 'wise Stubb, what have you to complain of? Didn't he kick with right good will? it wasn't a common pitch pine leg he kicked with, was it? No, you were kicked by a great man, and with a beautiful ivory leg, Stubb. It's an honor; I consider it an honor. Listen, wise Stubb. In old England the greatest lords think it great glory to be slapped by a queen, and made garter-knights[5] of; but, be *your* boast, Stubb, that ye were kicked by old Ahab, and made a wise man of. Remember what I say; *be* kicked by him; account his kicks honors; and on no account kick back; for you can't help yourself, wise Stubb. Don't you see that pyramid?' With that, he all of a sudden seemed somehow, in some queer fashion, to swim off into the air. I snored; rolled over; and there I was in my hammock! Now, what do you think of that dream, Flask?"

"I don't know; it seems a sort of foolish to me, tho'."

"May be; may be. But it's made a wise man of me, Flask. D'ye see Ahab standing there, sideways looking over the stern? Well, the best thing you can do, Flask, is to let that old man alone; never speak quick to him,[6] whatever he says. Halloa! what's that he shouts? Hark!"

"Mast-head, there![7] Look sharp, all of ye! There are whales hereabouts! If ye see a white one, split your lungs for him!"

"What d'ye think of that now, Flask? ain't there a small drop of something queer about that, eh? A white whale—did ye mark that, man? Look ye—there's something special in the wind. Stand by for it, Flask. Ahab has that that's bloody on his mind. But, mum; he comes this way."

CHAPTER 32

CETOLOGY[1]

Already we are boldly launched upon the deep; but soon we shall be lost in its unshored, harborless immensities. Ere that come to pass; ere the Pequod's

3. What he has to cover his backside instead of cloth.
4. Old crone, seeking warmth from the fire. Stubb's dream crosses genders as well as species.
5. The queen (in Stubb's time) admits a knight to the Order of the Garter by striking him upon the shoulder with the flat side of a swordblade.
6. Never speak back to him, defy him.
7. Ahab calls out to the lookouts high up the mast.

1. The branch of zoology dealing with whales. The chapter rejects and parodies the claims of science to explain the wonders and mysteries of nature and the universe, which require poetic imagination as well, and that even so elude final understanding.

weedy hull rolls side by side with the barnacled hulls of the leviathan; at the outset it is but well to attend to a matter almost indispensable to a thorough appreciative understanding of the more special leviathanic revelations and allusions of all sorts which are to follow.

It is some systematized exhibition of the whale in his broad genera, that I would now fain put before you. Yet is it no easy task. The classification of the constituents of a chaos, nothing less is here essayed. Listen to what the best and latest authorities have laid down.

"No branch of Zoology is so much involved as that which is entitled Cetology," says Captain Scoresby, A.D. 1820.

"It is not my intention, were it in my power, to enter into the inquiry as to the true method of dividing the cetacea into groups and families. * * * Utter confusion exists among the historians of this animal" (sperm whale), says Surgeon Beale,[2] A.D. 1839.

"Unfitness to pursue our research in the unfathomable waters." "Impenetrable veil covering our knowledge of the cetacea." "A field strewn with thorns." "All these incomplete indications but serve to torture us naturalists."

Thus speak of the whale, the great Cuvier, and John Hunter, and Lesson,[3] those lights of zoology and anatomy. Nevertheless, though of real knowledge there be little, yet of books there are a plenty; and so in some small degree, with cetology, or the science of whales. Many are the men, small and great, old and new, landsmen and seamen, who have at large or in little, written of the whale. Run over a few:—The Authors of the Bible; Aristotle; Pliny; Aldrovandi; Sir Thomas Browne; Gesner; Ray; Linnæus; Rondeletius; Willoughby; Green; Artedi; Sibbald; Brisson; Marten; Lacépède; Bonnaterre; Desmarest; Baron Cuvier; Frederick Cuvier; John Hunter; Owen; Scoresby; Beale; Bennett; J. Ross Browne; the Author of Miriam Coffin; Olmsted; and the Rev. T. Cheever.[4] But to what ultimate generalizing purpose all these have written, the above cited extracts will show.

Of the names in this list of whale authors, only those following Owen ever saw living whales; and but one of them was a real professional harpooner and whaleman. I mean Captain Scoresby. On the separate subject of the Greenland or right-whale, he is the best existing authority. But Scoresby knew nothing and says nothing of the great sperm whale, compared with which the Greenland whale is almost unworthy mentioning. And here be it said, that the Greenland whale is an usurper upon the throne of the seas. He is not even by any means the largest of the whales. Yet, owing to the long priority of his claims, and the profound ignorance which, till some seventy

2. Scoresby's *Account of the Arctic Regions* (1820) and his *Journal of a Voyage to the Northern Whale-Fishery* (1823) and Beale (1839). The asterisks in this paragraph are Melville's.
3. As Vincent (1949, p. 139) first pointed out, Melville lifted from Beale's epigraph page the quotation from Scoresby (1823), along with the unassigned three, from Baron Georges Cuvier (1769–1832), the English anatomist John Hunter (1728–1793), and the French zoologist René-Primàvere Lesson (1794–1849).
4. Melville draws heavily on the twenty-five-page article "Whales" in *The Penny Cyclopædia* (London, 1843). He took there this list of names through Linnæus, adding only Browne. Karl von Linné (1707–1778), Latinized as Linnæus, was a Swedish botanist and the founder of the modern binomial system of classifying organisms. Melville knew firsthand only the writers from Scoresby on. Chiefly, he used Beale, Browne (1846), Henry T. Cheever's *The Whale and His Captors* (1850, already available when he returned to New York in February), and Scoresby (1820). Melville may have used "T. Cheever" instead of "Henry T. Cheever" to minimize what he called on July 3, 1846, the malicious "man of the Evangelist" who had savaged *Typee* in the New York *Evangelist*, or he may have been abbreviating as he did in the "Extracts" with "Sir T. Browne."

years back, invested the then fabulous or utterly unknown sperm-whale, and which ignorance to this present day still reigns in all but some few scientific retreats and whale-ports; this usurpation has been every way complete. Reference to nearly all the leviathanic allusions in the great poets of past days, will satisfy you that the Greenland whale, without one rival, was to them the monarch of the seas. But the time has at last come for a new proclamation. This is Charing Cross;[5] hear ye! good people all,—the Greenland whale is deposed,—the great sperm whale now reigneth!

There are only two books in being which at all pretend to put the living sperm whale before you, and at the same time, in the remotest degree succeed in the attempt. Those books are Beale's and Bennett's;[6] both in their time surgeons to English South-Sea whale-ships, and both exact and reliable men. The original matter touching the sperm whale to be found in their volumes is necessarily small; but so far as it goes, it is of excellent quality, though mostly confined to scientific description. As yet, however, the sperm whale, scientific or poetic, lives not complete in any literature. Far above all other hunted whales, his is an unwritten life.

Now the various species of whales need some sort of popular comprehensive classification, if only an easy outline one for the present, hereafter to be filled in all its departments by subsequent laborers. As no better man advances to take this matter in hand, I hereupon offer my own poor endeavors. I promise nothing complete; because any human thing supposed to be complete, must for that very reason infallibly be faulty. I shall not pretend to a minute anatomical description of the various species,[7] or—in this place at least—to much of any description. My object here is simply to project the draught[8] of a systematization of cetology. I am the architect, not the builder.

But it is a ponderous task; no ordinary letter-sorter in the Post-office is equal to it. To grope down into the bottom of the sea after them; to have one's hands among the unspeakable foundations, ribs, and very pelvis of the world; this is a fearful thing. What am I that I should essay to hook the nose of this leviathan! The awful tauntings in Job[9] might well appal me. "Will he (the leviathan) make a covenant with thee? Behold the hope of him is vain!" But I have swam through libraries and sailed through oceans; I have had to do with whales with these visible hands; I am in earnest; and I will try. There are some preliminaries to settle.

First: The uncertain, unsettled condition of this science of Cetology is in the very vestibule attested by the fact, that in some quarters it still remains a moot point whether a whale be a fish.[1] In his System of Nature, A.D. 1766, Linnæus declares, "I hereby separate the whales from the fish." But of my own knowledge, I know that down to the year 1850, sharks and shad, alewives and herring, against Linnæus's express edict, were still found dividing the possession of the same seas with the Leviathan.

The grounds upon which Linnæus would fain have banished the whales from the waters, he states as follows: "On account of their warm bilocular

5. At the center of old London, where new monarchs were proclaimed.
6. Frederick Debell Bennett, *Narrative of a Whaling Voyage Round the Globe* (1840).
7. The *Penny Cyclopædia* article "Whales" gives just this kind of description. Melville never mentions the article while raiding it for numerous items.
8. Draft, preliminary sketch, as in the often-quoted ending of this chapter.
9. See Job 41.4, 9 for the awe-striking ("awe-full") rhetorical demands God asserts toward Job here.
1. The *Penny Cyclopædia* begins "Whales" with this question, citing the work and the words of Linnæus quoted here and in the next paragraph.

heart, their lungs, their movable eyelids, their hollow ears, penem intrantem feminam mammis lactantem,"[2] and finally, "ex lege naturæ jure meritoque."[3] I submitted all this to my friends Simeon Macey and Charley Coffin, of Nantucket, both messmates of mine in a certain voyage, and they united in the opinion that the reasons set forth were altogether insufficient. Charley profanely hinted they were humbug.

Be it known that, waiving all argument, I take the good old fashioned ground that the whale is a fish, and call upon holy Jonah to back me. This fundamental thing settled, the next point is, in what internal respect does the whale differ from other fish. Above, Linnæus has given you those items. But in brief, they are these: lungs and warm blood; whereas, all other fish are lungless and cold blooded.

Next: how shall we define the whale, by his obvious externals, so as conspicuously to label him for all time to come? To be short, then, a whale is *a spouting fish with a horizontal tail*. There you have him. However contracted, that definition is the result of expanded meditation. A walrus spouts much like a whale, but the walrus is not a fish, because he is amphibious. But the last term of the definition is still more cogent, as coupled with the first. Almost any one must have noticed that all the fish familiar to landsmen have not a flat, but a vertical, or up-and-down tail. Whereas, among spouting fish the tail, though it may be similarly shaped, invariably assumes a horizontal position.

By the above definition of what a whale is, I do by no means exclude from the leviathanic brotherhood any sea creature hitherto identified with the whale by the best informed Nantucketers; nor, on the other hand, link with it any fish hitherto authoritatively regarded as alien.[4] Hence, all the smaller, spouting, and horizontal tailed fish must be included in this ground-plan of Cetology. Now, then, come the grand divisions of the entire whale host.

First: According to magnitude I divide the whales into three primary BOOKS (subdivisible into Chapters), and these shall comprehend them all, both small and large.

I. The Folio Whale; II. the Octavo Whale; III. the Duodecimo Whale.[5]

As the type of the Folio I present the *Sperm Whale*; of the Octavo, the *Grampus*; of the Duodecimo, the *Porpoise*.

FOLIOS. Among these I here include the following chapters;—I. The *Sperm Whale*; II. the *Right Whale*; III. the *Fin Back Whale*; IV, the *Hump-backed Whale*; V. the *Razor Back Whale*; VI. the *Sulphur Bottom Whale*.

2. A penis that enters the female, who gives milk from breasts (Latin).
3. From the law of nature, justly and deservedly (Latin).
4. I am aware that down to the present time, the fish styled Lamantins and Dugongs (Pig-fish and Sow-fish of the Coffins of Nantucket) are included by many naturalists among the whales. But as these pig-fish are a nosy, contemptible set, mostly lurking in the mouths of rivers, and feeding on wet hay, and especially as they do not spout, I deny their credentials as whales; and have presented them with their passports to quit the Kingdom of Cetology. [Melville's note.] Here, Melville follows the *Penny Cyclopædia* in excluding these animals (which today we know as manatees); hereafter, he no longer follows its method and its degree of scientific precision.
5. "Folio," "octavo," and "duodecimo" are technical terms by which printers and booksellers classify the size of books and their pages from large to small. See Melville's note (p. 115, n. 3) about his omission of quarto after octavo. His classifying whales simply by size deliberately defies the elaborately detailed scientific system readily available in the *Penny Cyclopædia* article, and his adopting bibliographical terminology for size—treating whales as if they were books—is an added humorous fling.

BOOK I. (*Folio*), CHAPTER I. (*Sperm Whale*).—This whale, among the English of old vaguely known as the Trumpa[6] whale, and the Physeter whale, and the Anvil Headed whale, is the present Cachalot of the French, and the Pottfisch of the Germans, and the Macrocephalus of the Long Words.[7] He is, without doubt, the largest inhabitant of the globe;[8] the most formidable of all whales to encounter; the most majestic in aspect; and lastly, by far the most valuable in commerce; he being the only creature from which that valuable substance, spermaceti, is obtained. All his peculiarities will, in many other places, be enlarged upon. It is chiefly with his name that I now have to do. Philologically considered, it is absurd. Some centuries ago, when the Sperm whale was almost wholly unknown in his own proper individuality, and when his oil was only accidentally obtained from the stranded fish; in those days spermaceti, it would seem, was popularly supposed to be derived from a creature identical with the one then known in England as the Greenland or Right Whale. It was the idea also, that this same spermaceti was that quickening humor[9] of the Greenland Whale which the first syllable of the word literally expresses. In those times, also, spermaceti was exceedingly scarce, not being used for light, but only as an ointment and medicament. It was only to be had from the druggists as you nowadays buy an ounce of rhubarb.[1] When, as I opine, in the course of time, the true nature of spermaceti became known, its original name was still retained by the dealers; no doubt to enhance its value by a notion so strangely significant of its scarcity. And so the appellation must at last have come to be bestowed upon the whale from which this spermaceti was really derived.

BOOK I. (*Folio*), CHAPTER II. (*Right Whale*).—In one respect this is the most venerable of the leviathans, being the one first regularly hunted by man. It yields the article commonly known as whalebone or baleen; and the oil specially known as "whale oil,"[2] an inferior article in commerce. Among the fishermen, he is indiscriminately designated by all the following titles: The Whale; the Greenland Whale; the Black Whale; the Great Whale; the True Whale; the Right Whale. There is a deal of obscurity concerning the identity of the species thus multitudinously baptized. What then is the whale, which I include in the second species of my Folios? It is the Great Mysticetus of the English naturalists; the Greenland Whale of the English whalemen; the Baleine Ordinaire of the French whalemen; the Gröndlands Valfisk[3] of the Swedes. It is the whale which for more than two centuries past has been hunted by the Dutch and English in the Arctic seas; it is the whale which the American fishermen have long pursued in the Indian ocean, on the Brazil Banks, on the Nor' West Coast,[4] and

6. From his trump or spout (French "trompe").
7. Melville's jab at the pedants who use them. "Pottfisch": pot fish (German). "Macrocephalus": largehead (Greek).
8. Melville knew that not the sperm whale but the blue, or sulfur-bottom, whale is the largest, but his literary purpose required that he call the more evocative whale the largest.
9. Sperm. "Spermaceti": sperm of whales.
1. A laxative made from the plant's leaves and roots. Melville knew *Macbeth* 5.3.55: "What rhubarb, senna, or what purgative drug, Would scour these English hence?"
2. Not to be confused with spermaceti (see Ch. 75). "Baleen": large slats of limber bonelike tissue (actually stiff hair) in the whale's mouth; commonly called Whalebone.
3. Greenland whale. "Mysticetus": the supposed Greek word for this whale. "Baleine Ordinaire": common whale.
4. The old name for the northernmost coasts of North America, both east and west.

various other parts of the world, designated by them Right Whale Cruising Grounds.

Some pretend to see a difference between the Greenland whale of the English and the right whale of the Americans. But they precisely agree in all their grand features; nor has there yet been presented a single determinate fact upon which to ground a radical distinction. It is by endless subdivisions based upon the most inconclusive differences, that some departments of natural history become so repellingly intricate. The right whale will be elsewhere treated of at some length, with reference to elucidating the sperm whale.

BOOK I. (*Folio*), Chapter iii. (*Fin-Back*).—Under this head I reckon a monster which, by the various names of Fin-Back, Tall-Spout, and Long-John, has been seen almost in every sea and is commonly the whale whose distant jet is so often descried by passengers crossing the Atlantic, in the New York packet-tracks. In the length he attains, and in his baleen, the Fin-back resembles the right whale, but is of a less portly girth, and a lighter color, approaching to olive. His great lips present a cable-like aspect, formed by the intertwisting, slanting folds of large wrinkles. His grand distinguishing feature, the fin, from which he derives his name, is often a conspicuous object. This fin is some three or four feet long, growing vertically from the hinder part of the back, of an angular shape, and with a very sharp pointed end. Even if not the slightest other part of the creature be visible, this isolated fin will, at times, be seen plainly projecting from the surface. When the sea is moderately calm, and slightly marked with spherical ripples, and this gnomon-like fin stands up and casts shadows upon the wrinkled surface, it may well be supposed that the watery circle surrounding it somewhat resembles a dial, with its style and wavy hour-lines graved on it. On that Ahaz-dial the shadow often goes back.[5] The Fin-Back is not gregarious. He seems a whale-hater, as some men are man-haters. Very shy; always going solitary; unexpectedly rising to the surface in the remotest and most sullen waters; his straight and single lofty jet rising like a tall misanthropic spear upon a barren plain; gifted with such wondrous power and velocity in swimming, as to defy all present pursuit from man; this leviathan seems the banished and unconquerable Cain[6] of his race, bearing for his mark that style upon his back. From having the baleen in his mouth, the Fin-Back is sometimes included with the right whale, among a theoretic species denominated *Whalebone whales*, that is, whales with baleen. Of these so called Whalebone whales, there would seem to be several varieties, most of which, however, are little known. Broad-nosed whales and beaked whales; pike-headed whales; bunched whales; under-jawed whales and rostrated[7] whales, are the fishermen's names for a few sorts.

In connexion with this appellative of "Whalebone whales," it is of great importance to mention, that however such a nomenclature may be

5. In Isaiah 38.8, time already marked off by the shadow on the sundial of Ahaz is called back by the Lord: "Behold, I will bring again the shadow of the degrees, which is gone down in the sun dial of Ahaz, ten degrees backward." The fin, like the "gnomon" (vertical pin or plate of a sundial) shifts irregularly with the motion of the whale.
6. The first human being to be born. He kills his brother, Abel, and is punished: "And the Lord set a mark upon Cain, lest any finding him should kill him. And Cain went out from the presence of the Lord, and dwelt in the Land of Nod, on the east of Eden" (Genesis 4.15–16).
7. With an elongated snout. "Pike-headed": sharp like a spear. "Bunched": humped. "Under-jawed": with protruding jaws.

convenient in facilitating allusions to some kind of whales, yet it is in vain to attempt a clear classification of the Leviathan, founded upon either his baleen, or hump, or fin, or teeth;[8] notwithstanding that those marked parts or features very obviously seem better adapted to afford the basis for a regular system of Cetology than any other detached bodily distinctions, which the whale, in his kinds, presents. How then? The baleen, hump, back-fin, and teeth; these are things whose peculiarities are indiscriminately dispersed among all sorts of whales, without any regard to what may be the nature of their structure in other and more essential particulars. Thus, the sperm whale and the humpbacked whale, each has a hump; but there the similitude ceases. Then, this same humpbacked whale and the Greenland whale, each of these has baleen; but there again the similitude ceases. And it is just the same with the other parts above mentioned. In various sorts of whales, they form such irregular combinations; or, in the case of any one of them detached, such an irregular isolation; as utterly to defy all general methodization formed upon such a basis. On this rock every one of the whale-naturalists has split.

But it may possibly be conceived that, in the internal parts of the whale, in his anatomy—there, at least, we shall be able to hit the right classification. Nay; what thing, for example, is there in the Greenland whale's anatomy more striking than his baleen? Yet we have seen that by his baleen it is impossible correctly to classify the Greenland whale. And if you descend into the bowels of the various leviathans, why there you will not find distinctions a fiftieth part as available to the systematizer as those external ones already enumerated. What then remains? nothing but to take hold of the whales bodily, in their entire liberal volume, and boldly sort them that way. And this is the Bibliographical system here adopted; and it is the only one that can possibly succeed, for it alone is practicable. To proceed.

BOOK I. (*Folio*), CHAPTER IV. (*Hump Back*).—This whale is often seen on the northern American coast. He has been frequently captured there, and towed into harbor. He has a great pack on him like a peddler; or you might call him the Elephant and Castle[9] whale. At any rate, the popular name for him does not sufficiently distinguish him, since the sperm whale also has a hump, though a smaller one. His oil is not very valuable. He has baleen. He is the most gamesome and lighthearted of all the whales, making more gay foam and white water generally than any other of them.

BOOK I. (*Folio*), CHAPTER V. (*Razor Back*).—Of this whale little is known but his name. I have seen him at a distance off Cape Horn. Of a retiring nature, he eludes both hunters and philosophers. Though no coward, he has never yet shown any part of him but his back, which rises in a long sharp ridge. Let him go. I know little more of him, nor does anybody else.

BOOK I. (*Folio*), CHAPTER VI. (*Sulphur Bottom*).—Another retiring gentleman, with a brimstone belly, doubtless got by scraping along the Tartarian tiles[1] in some of his profounder divings. He is seldom seen; at least I have never seen him except in the remoter southern seas, and then always

8. Melville follows Beale here and in the next paragraph.
9. Elephants in medieval drawings were often shown with "castles" (howdahs) on their backs to carry soldiers, and many inns took that capacious and hospitable emblem as their sign.
1. This whale's "brimstone" (sulfur-colored) belly got yellowed by scraping the roof tiles of hell, at the bottom of the ocean. Tartarus is hell, in Greek mythology.

at too great a distance to study his countenance. He is never chased; he would run away with rope-walks of line.[2] Prodigies are told of him. Adieu, Sulphur Bottom! I can say nothing more that is true of ye, nor can the oldest Nantucketer.

Thus ends BOOK I. (*Folio*), and now begins BOOK II. (*Octavo*).

OCTAVOES.[3] These embrace the whales of middling magnitude, among which at present may be numbered:—I., the *Grampus*; II., the *Black Fish*; III., the *Narwhale*; IV., the *Killer;* V., the *Thrasher.*

BOOK II. (*Octavo*), Chapter I. (*Grampus*).—Though this fish, whose loud sonorous breathing, or rather blowing, has furnished a proverb to landsmen,[4] is so well known a denizen of the deep, yet is he not popularly classed among whales. But possessing all the grand distinctive features of the leviathan, most naturalists have recognised him for one. He is of moderate octavo size, varying from fifteen to twenty-five feet in length, and of corresponding dimensions round the waist. He swims in herds; he is never regularly hunted, though his oil is considerable in quantity, and pretty good for light. By some fishermen his approach is regarded as premonitory of the advance of the great sperm whale.

BOOK II. (*Octavo*), Chapter II. (*Black Fish*).—I give the popular fishermen's names for all these fish, for generally they are the best. Where any name happens to be vague or inexpressive, I shall say so, and suggest another. I do so now, touching the Black Fish, so called, because blackness is the rule among almost all whales. So, call him the Hyena Whale, if you please. His voracity is well known, and from the circumstance that the inner angles of his lips are curved upwards, he carries an everlasting Mephistophelean grin[5] on his face. This whale averages some sixteen or eighteen feet in length. He is found in almost all latitudes. He has a peculiar way of showing his dorsal hooked fin[6] in swimming, which looks something like a Roman nose. When not more profitably employed, the sperm whale hunters sometimes capture the Hyena whale, to keep up the supply of cheap oil for domestic employment—as some frugal housekeepers, in the absence of company, and quite alone by themselves, burn unsavory tallow[7] instead of odorous wax. Though their blubber is very thin, some of these whales will yield you upwards of thirty gallons of oil.

BOOK II. (*Octavo*), Chapter III. (*Narwhale*), that is, *Nostril whale*.—Another instance of a curiously named whale, so named I suppose from his peculiar horn being originally mistaken for a peaked nose.[8] The

2. Ropes (line) long as those laid straight out in elongated, covered buildings (rope walks) during manufacture.
3. Why this book of whales is not denominated the Quarto is very plain. Because, while the whales of this order, though smaller than those of the former order, nevertheless retain a proportionate likeness to them in figure, yet the bookbinder's Quarto volume in its diminished form does not preserve the shape of the Folio volume, but the Octavo volume does. [Melville's note.]
4. I.e., like a grampus, used of a hard-breathing or snoring person.
5. Vincent (1949) traces Melville's lively passage to the simple description ("the angles of the lips are curved upwards" in "an innocent, smiling expression") and picture in Bennett (1840). The hyena is notorious for grinning widely and laughing screechily (as in the title of Ch. 49). In Goethe's *Faust*, Mephistopheles grins malevolently, as in Section 23, *Dreary Day*.
6. On the whale's back.
7. Bad-smelling, smoking fat of cows or sheep.
8. Vincent (1949) shows that for this account Melville follows Scoresby (1820) and then makes fun of Scoresby's surmises about the use of its horn by attributing them to "Charley Coffin" and "some sailors" (later in the paragraph). "Scoresby will help out Melville several times, and on each occasion Melville will satirize him under a pseudonym" (Vincent, p. 134).

creature is some sixteen feet in length, while its horn averages five feet, though some exceed ten, and even attain to fifteen feet. Strictly speaking, this horn is but a lengthened tusk, growing out from the jaw in a line a little depressed from the horizontal. But it is only found on the sinister[9] side, which has an ill effect, giving its owner something analogous to the aspect of a clumsy left-handed man. What precise purpose this ivory horn or lance answers, it would be hard to say. It does not seem to be used like the blade of the sword-fish and bill-fish;[1] though some sailors tell me that the Narwhale employs it for a rake in turning over the bottom of the sea for food. Charley Coffin said it was used for an ice-piercer; for the Narwhale, rising to the surface of the Polar Sea, and finding it sheeted with ice, thrusts his horn up, and so breaks through. But you cannot prove either of these surmises to be correct. My own opinion is, that however this one-sided horn may really be used by the Narwhale—however that may be—it would certainly be very convenient to him for a folder in reading pamphlets.[2] The Narwhale I have heard called the Tusked whale, the Horned whale, and the Unicorn whale. He is certainly a curious example of the Unicornism to be found in almost every kingdom of animated nature. From certain cloistered old authors I have gathered that this same sea-unicorn's horn was in ancient days regarded as the great antidote against poison, and as such, preparations of it brought immense prices. It was also distilled to a volatile salts[3] for fainting ladies, the same way that the horns of the male deer are manufactured into hartshorn. Originally it was in itself accounted an object of great curiosity. Black Letter[4] tells me that Sir Martin Frobisher on his return from that voyage, when Queen Bess did gallantly wave her jeweled hand to him from a window of Greenwich Palace,[5] as his bold ship sailed down the Thames; "when Sir Martin returned from that voyage," saith Black Letter, "on bended knees he presented to her highness a prodigious long horn of the Narwhale, which for a long period after hung in the castle at Windsor." An Irish author avers that the Earl of Leicester, on bended knees, did likewise present to her highness another horn, pertaining to a land beast of the unicorn nature.[6]

The Narwhale has a very picturesque, leopard-like look, being of a milk-white ground color, dotted with round and oblong spots of black. His oil is very superior, clear and fine; but there is little of it, and he is seldom hunted. He is mostly found in the circumpolar seas.

BOOK II. (*Octavo*), CHAPTER IV. (*Killer*).—Of this whale little is precisely known to the Nantucketer, and nothing at all to the professed naturalist. From what I have seen of him at a distance, I should say that he was about the bigness of a grampus. He is very savage—a sort of Feegee[7]

9. Left.
1. A fish whose jaw is shaped like a bill, or a spear with a hook-bladed end.
2. If you used this horn you could turn a page over without licking your index finger.
3. An ammoniac inhalant (smelling salts).
4. Melville invents the old writer and the quotation.
5. The account of Sir Martin Frobisher's voyages in Hakluyt's *Principal Navigations* (1600) does mention Queen Bess (Elizabeth) as having a "horne," though not a gift from Frobisher, and mentions her waving to him.
6. Melville also invents the "Irish author" as source of the indelicate story about Queen Elizabeth I's favorite, Earl of Leicester, himself the unicorn "land beast" who in this calumny presents to her "another horn."
7. Fiji Islanders of the southwest Pacific were accounted "very savage" cannibals.

fish. He sometimes takes the great Folio whales by the lip, and hangs there like a leech, till the mighty brute is worried to death. The Killer is never hunted. I never heard what sort of oil he has. Exception might be taken to the name bestowed upon this whale, on the ground of its indistinctness. For we are all killers, on land and on sea; Bonapartes and Sharks included.

BOOK II. (*Octavo*), Chapter v. (*Thrasher*).—This gentleman is famous for his tail, which he uses for a ferule in thrashing his foes. He mounts the Folio whale's back, and as he swims, he works his passage by flogging him; as some schoolmasters get along in the world by a similar process. Still less is known of the Thrasher than of the Killer. Both are outlaws, even in the lawless seas.

Thus ends BOOK II. (*Octavo*), and begins BOOK III. (*Duodecimo*).

DUODECIMOES.—These include the smaller whales. I. The Huzza Porpoise. II. The Algerine Porpoise. III. The Mealy-mouthed Porpoise.

To those who have not chanced specially to study the subject, it may possibly seem strange, that fishes not commonly exceeding four or five feet should be marshalled among WHALES—a word, which, in the popular sense, always conveys an idea of hugeness. But the creatures set down above as Duodecimoes are infallibly whales, by the terms of my definition of what a whale is—i. e. a spouting fish, with a horizontal tail.

BOOK III. (*Duodecimo*), Chapter i. (*Huzza Porpoise*).—This is the common porpoise found almost all over the globe. The name is of my own bestowal; for there are more than one sort of porpoises, and something must be done to distinguish them. I call him thus, because he always swims in hilarious shoals, which upon the broad sea keep tossing themselves to heaven like caps in a Fourth-of-July crowd. Their appearance is generally hailed with delight by the mariner. Full of fine spirits, they invariably come from the breezy billows to windward. They are the lads that always live before the wind. They are accounted a lucky omen. If you yourself can withstand three cheers at beholding these vivacious fish, then heaven help ye; the spirit of godly gamesomeness is not in ye. A well-fed, plump Huzza Porpoise will yield you one good gallon of good oil. But the fine and delicate fluid extracted from his jaws is exceedingly valuable. It is in request among jewellers and watchmakers. Sailors put it on their hones. Porpoise meat is good eating, you know. It may never have occurred to you that a porpoise spouts. Indeed, his spout is so small that it is not very readily discernible. But the next time you have a chance, watch him; and you will then see the great Sperm whale himself in miniature.

BOOK III. (*Duodecimo*), Chapter ii. (*Algerine Porpoise*). A pirate. Very savage. He is only found, I think, in the Pacific. He is somewhat larger than the Huzza Porpoise, but much of the same general make. Provoke him, and he will buckle to a shark. I have lowered for him many times, but never yet saw him captured.

BOOK III. (*Duodecimo*), Chapter iii. (*Mealy-mouthed Porpoise*).—The largest kind of Porpoise; and only found in the Pacific, so far as it is known. The only English name, by which he has hitherto been designated, is that of the fishers—Right-Whale Porpoise, from the circumstance that he is chiefly found in the vicinity of that Folio. In shape, he differs in some degree from the Huzza Porpoise, being of a less rotund and jolly girth; indeed, he is of quite a neat and gentleman-like figure. He has no fins on his back (most other porpoises have), he has a lovely tail, and sentimental

Indian[8] eyes of a hazel hue. But his mealy-mouth spoils all. Though his entire back down to his side fins is of a deep sable, yet a boundary line, distinct as the mark in a ship's hull, called the "bright waist," that line streaks him from stem to stern, with two separate colors, black above and white below. The white comprises part of his head, and the whole of his mouth, which makes him look as if he had just escaped from a felonious visit to a meal-bag. A most mean and mealy aspect! His oil is much like that of the common porpoise.

* * *

Beyond the DUODECIMO, this system does not proceed, inasmuch as the Porpoise is the smallest of the whales. Above, you have all the Leviathans of note. But there are a rabble of uncertain, fugitive, half-fabulous whales, which, as an American whale-man, I know by reputation, but not personally. I shall enumerate them by their forecastle appellations; for possibly such a list may be valuable to future investigators, who may complete what I have here but begun. If any of the following whales, shall hereafter be caught and marked, then he can readily be incorporated into this System, according to his Folio, Octavo, or Duodecimo magnitude:—The Bottle-Nose Whale; the Junk Whale; the Pudding-Headed Whale; the Cape Whale; the Leading Whale; the Cannon Whale; the Scragg Whale; the Coppered Whale; the Elephant Whale; the Iceberg Whale; the Quog Whale; the Blue Whale; &c. From Icelandic, Dutch, and old English authorities, there might be quoted other lists of uncertain whales, blessed with all manner of uncouth names. But I omit them as altogether obsolete; and can hardly help suspecting them for mere sounds, full of Leviathanism, but signifying nothing.[9]

Finally: It was stated at the outset, that this system would not be here, and at once, perfected. You cannot but plainly see that I have kept my word. But I now leave my cetological System standing thus unfinished, even as the great Cathedral of Cologne was left, with the crane still standing upon the top of the uncompleted tower.[1] For small erections may be finished by their first architects; grand ones, true ones, ever leave the copestone to posterity. God keep me from ever completing anything. This whole book is but a draught—nay, but the draught of a draught. Oh, Time, Strength, Cash, and Patience!

CHAPTER 33

THE SPECKSYNDER[1]

Concerning the officers of the whale-craft, this seems as good a place as any to set down a little domestic peculiarity on ship-board, arising from

8. A cliché from romantic poems and stories set in India.
9. *Macbeth* 5.5.27–28: "full of sound and fury, signifying nothing."
1. Melville saw the cathedral in 1849, but here he was influenced by the reprinting in *Harper's New Monthly Magazine* (September 1850) of the London *Examiner* essay on William Wordsworth's posthumous *The Prelude* as part of an "ambiguous conception" that was "doomed to share the fate of so many other colossal undertakings." The *Examiner* continued: "Of the three parts of his *Recluse*, thus planned, only the second (the *Excursion*, published in 1814), has been completed. Of the other two there exists only the first book of the first, and the plan of the third. The *Recluse* will remain in fragmentary greatness, a poetical Cathedral of Cologne."
1. Melville got this incorrectly anglicized form of the Dutch word *speksnijder* (with *sni* instead of the *syn* sound) from Scoresby, as well as other facts in the paragraph. His not recognizing the error suggests that Melville did not learn much Dutch from older members of his Albany family.

the existence of the harpooneer class of officers, a class unknown of course in any other marine than the whale-fleet.

The large importance attached to the harpooneer's vocation is evinced by the fact, that originally in the old Dutch Fishery, two centuries and more ago, the command of a whale ship was not wholly lodged in the person now called the captain, but was divided between him and an officer called the Specksynder. Literally this word means Fat-Cutter; usage, however, in time made it equivalent to Chief Harpooneer. In those days, the captain's authority was restricted to the navigation and general management of the vessel: while over the whale-hunting department and all its concerns, the Specksynder or Chief Harpooneer reigned supreme. In the British Greenland Fishery, under the corrupted title of Specksioneer, this old Dutch official is still retained, but his former dignity is sadly abridged. At present he ranks simply as senior Harpooneer; and as such, is but one of the captain's more inferior subalterns. Nevertheless, as upon the good conduct of the harpooneers the success of a whaling voyage largely depends, and since in the American Fishery he is not only an important officer in the boat, but under certain circumstances (night watches on a whaling ground) the command of the ship's deck is also his; therefore the grand political maxim of the sea demands, that he should nominally live apart from the men before the mast, and be in some way distinguished as their professional superior; though always, by them, familiarly regarded as their social equal.

Now, one of the grand distinctions drawn between officer and man at sea, is this—the first lives aft, the last forward. Hence, in whale-ships and merchantmen alike, the mates have their quarters with the captain; and so, too, in most of the American whalers the harpooneers are lodged in the after part of the ship. That is to say, they take their meals in the captain's cabin, and sleep in a place indirectly communicating with it.[2]

Though the long period of a Southern whaling voyage (by far the longest of all voyages now or ever made by man), the peculiar perils of it, and the community of interest prevailing among a company, all of whom, high or low, depend for their profits, not upon fixed wages, but upon their common luck, together with their common vigilance, intrepidity, and hard work; though all these things do in some cases tend to beget a less rigorous discipline than in merchantmen generally; yet, never mind how much like an old Mesopotamian family[3] these whalemen may, in some primitive instances, live together; for all that, the punctilious externals, at least, of the quarter-deck are seldom materially relaxed, and in no instance done away. Indeed, many are the Nantucket ships in which you will see the skipper parading his quarter-deck with an elated grandeur not surpassed in any military navy; nay, extorting almost as much outward homage as if he wore the imperial purple,[4] and not the shabbiest of pilot-cloth.

And though of all men the moody captain of the Pequod was the least given to that sort of shallowest assumption; and though the only homage he ever exacted, was implicit, instantaneous obedience; though he required no man to remove the shoes from his feet ere stepping upon the quarter-deck; and though there were times when, owing to peculiar circumstances connected with events hereafter to be detailed, he addressed them in

2. Two of the harpooneers, Tashtego and Queequeg, are later shown as quartered forward in the crew's forecastle (Ch. 54).
3. In one of the earliest patriarchal civilizations, in southwest Asia, north of the Persian Gulf.
4. The color of the toga of a Roman emperor.

unusual terms, whether of condescension or *in terrorem*,[5] or otherwise; yet even Captain Ahab was by no means unobservant of the paramount forms and usages of the sea.

Nor, perhaps, will it fail to be eventually perceived, that behind those forms and usages, as it were, he sometimes masked himself; incidentally making use of them for other and more private ends than they were legitimately intended to subserve. That certain sultanism of his brain, which had otherwise in a good degree remained unmanifested; through those forms that same sultanism became incarnate in an irresistible dictatorship. For be a man's intellectual superiority what it will, it can never assume the practical, available supremacy over other men, without the aid of some sort of external arts and entrenchments,[6] always, in themselves, more or less paltry and base. This it is, that for ever keeps God's true princes of the Empire from the world's hustings; and leaves the highest honors that this air can give, to those men who become famous more through their infinite inferiority to the choice hidden handful of the Divine Inert,[7] than through their undoubted superiority over the dead level of the mass. Such large virtue lurks in these small things when extreme political superstitions invest them, that in some royal instances even to idiot imbecility they have imparted potency. But when, as in the case of Nicholas the Czar,[8] the ringed crown of geographical empire encircles an imperial brain; then, the plebeian herds crouch abased before the tremendous centralization. Nor, will the tragic dramatist who would depict mortal indomitableness in its fullest sweep and direst swing, ever forget a hint, incidentally so important in his art, as the one now alluded to.

But Ahab, my Captain, still moves before me in all his Nantucket grimness and shagginess; and in this episode touching Emperors and Kings, I must not conceal that I have only to do with a poor old whale-hunter like him; and, therefore, all outward majestical trappings and housings are denied me. Oh, Ahab! what shall be grand in thee, it must needs be plucked at from the skies, and dived for in the deep, and featured in the unbodied air![9]

CHAPTER 34

THE CABIN-TABLE

It is noon; and Dough-Boy, the steward, thrusting his pale loaf-of-bread face from the cabin-scuttle, announces dinner[1] to his lord and master; who, sitting in the lee quarter-boat, has just been taking an observation

5. Under threat (Latin).
6. Fortifications, the forms and usages behind which Ahab sometimes masked himself.
7. Historically, the prince-electors of the Holy Roman Empire; here, metaphorically, those by nature the "true princes" of God's empire, the "Divine Inert" who do not seek outward worldly honors or power by promoting themselves in any way, including electioneering "hustings" (bustling political self-aggrandizing). During the composition of *Moby-Dick*, Melville caused great consternation among his family and friends by refusing to have his daguerreotype taken so a portrait could be engraved and published in a magazine, but his idea of fame had changed, he wrote Hawthorne in early May 1851 (p. 568 and p. 563, n. 6); this passage suggests the nature of the change.
8. Nicholas I, czar of Russia (r. 1825–55).
9. In his task as a tragic dramatist who creates as well as reports, Melville (or his Ishmael) echoes Shakespeare's *I Henry IV* 1.3.201–05: "To pluck bright honor from the pale-faced moon, Or dive into the bottom of the deep, . . . And pluck up drowned honour by the locks."
1. By custom, on ship or shore, the noon or early afternoon meal, which was the heaviest of the day.

of the sun; and is now mutely reckoning the latitude[2] on the smooth, medallion-shaped tablet, reserved for that daily purpose on the upper part of his ivory leg. From his complete inattention to the tidings, you would think that moody Ahab had not heard his menial. But presently, catching hold of the mizen shrouds, he swings himself to the deck, and in an even, unexhilarated voice, saying, "Dinner, Mr. Starbuck," disappears into the cabin.

When the last echo of his sultan's[3] step has died away, and Starbuck, the first Emir, has every reason to suppose that he is seated, then Starbuck rouses from his quietude, takes a few turns along the planks, and, after a grave peep into the binnacle, says, with some touch of pleasantness, "Dinner, Mr. Stubb," and descends the scuttle. The second Emir lounges about the rigging awhile, and then slightly shaking the main brace, to see whether it be all right with that important rope, he likewise takes up the old burden,[4] and with a rapid "Dinner, Mr. Flask," follows after his predecessors.

But the third Emir, now seeing himself all alone on the quarter-deck, seems to feel relieved from some curious restraint; for, tipping all sorts of knowing winks in all sorts of directions, and kicking off his shoes, he strikes into a sharp but noiseless squall of a hornpipe right over the Grand Turk's head; and then, by a dexterous sleight, pitching his cap up into the mizen-top[5] for a shelf, he goes down rollicking, so far at least as he remains visible from the deck, reversing all other processions, by bringing up the rear with music. But ere stepping into the cabin doorway below, he pauses, ships a new face altogether, and, then, independent, hilarious little Flask enters King Ahab's presence, in the character of Abjectus,[6] or the Slave.

It is not the least among the strange things bred by the intense artificialness of sea-usages, that while in the open air of the deck some officers will, upon provocation, bear themselves boldly and defyingly enough towards their commander; yet, ten to one, let those very officers the next moment go down to their customary dinner in that same commander's cabin, and straightway their inoffensive, not to say deprecatory and humble air towards him, as he sits at the head of the table; this is marvellous, sometimes most comical. Wherefore this difference? A problem? Perhaps not. To have been Belshazzar,[7] King of Babylon; and to have been Belshazzar, not haughtily but courteously, therein certainly must have been some touch of mundane grandeur. But he who in the rightly regal and intelligent spirit presides over his own private dinner-table of invited guests, that man's unchallenged power and dominion of individual influence for the time; that man's royalty of state transcends Belshazzar's, for Belshazzar was not the greatest. Who has but once dined his friends, has tasted what it is to be Cæsar.[8] It is a witchery of social czarship which there is no withstanding. Now, if to this consideration you superadd the official supremacy of a ship-master, then, by inference, you will derive the cause of that peculiarity of sea-life just mentioned.

2. High noon was the time to determine the ship's position from observations of the sun.
3. Ahab is here ennobled as sultan and (in the next paragraph) Grand Turk with the three mates made his subordinate emirs, or chieftains.
4. Refrain, recurrent words ending each stanza of a song (here) or poem.
5. Platform near the top of the lowest section of the mizen-mast, the one farthest aft. "Hornpipe": lively folk dance.
6. Servile underling.
7. Daniel 5.1: "Belshazzar the king made a great feast to a thousand of his lords, and drank wine before the thousand."
8. Roman emperor.

Over his ivory-inlaid table, Ahab presided like a mute, maned sea-lion on the white coral beach, surrounded by his warlike but still deferential cubs. In his own proper turn, each officer waited to be served. They were as little children before Ahab; and yet, in Ahab, there seemed not to lurk the smallest social arrogance. With one mind, their intent eyes all fastened upon the old man's knife, as he carved the chief dish before him. I do not suppose that for the world they would have profaned that moment with the slightest observation, even upon so neutral a topic as the weather. No! And when reaching out his knife and fork, between which the slice of beef was locked, Ahab thereby motioned Starbuck's plate towards him, the mate received his meat as though receiving alms; and cut it tenderly; and a little started if, perchance, the knife grazed against the plate; and chewed it noiselessly; and swallowed it, not without circumspection. For, like the Coronation banquet at Frankfort, where the German Emperor profoundly dines with the seven Imperial Electors,[9] so these cabin meals were somehow solemn meals, eaten in awful silence; and yet at table old Ahab forbade not conversation; only he himself was dumb. What a relief it was to choking Stubb, when a rat made a sudden racket in the hold below. And poor little Flask, he was the youngest son, and little boy of this weary family party. His were the shinbones of the saline beef; his would have been the drumsticks. For Flask to have presumed to help himself, this must have seemed to him tantamount to larceny in the first degree. Had he helped himself at that table, doubtless, never more would he have been able to hold his head up in this honest world; nevertheless, strange to say, Ahab never forbade him. And had Flask helped himself, the chances were Ahab had never so much as noticed it. Least of all, did Flask presume to help himself to butter. Whether he thought the owners of the ship denied it to him, on account of its clotting his clear, sunny complexion; or whether he deemed that, on so long a voyage in such marketless waters, butter was at a premium, and therefore was not for him, a subaltern; however it was, Flask, alas! was a butterless man!

Another thing. Flask was the last person down at the dinner, and Flask is the first man up. Consider! For hereby Flask's dinner was badly jammed in point of time. Starbuck and Stubb both had the start of him; and yet they also have the privilege of lounging in the rear. If Stubb even, who is but a peg higher than Flask, happens to have but a small appetite, and soon shows symptoms of concluding his repast, then Flask must bestir himself, he will not get more than three mouthfuls that day; for it is against holy usage for Stubb to precede Flask to the deck. Therefore it was that Flask once admitted in private, that ever since he had arisen to the dignity of an officer, from that moment he had never known what it was to be otherwise than hungry, more or less. For what he ate did not so much relieve his hunger, as keep it immortal in him. Peace and satisfaction, thought Flask, have for ever departed from my stomach.[1] I am an officer; but, how I wish I could fist a bit of old-fashioned beef in the forecastle, as I used to when I was before the mast. There's the fruits of promotion now; there's the vanity of glory: there's the insanity of life! Besides, if it were so

9. After his election at Frankfurt-am-Main, each new Holy Roman emperor held a banquet with the electors.

1. Hardly an allusion, but an example of how saturated Melville was with biblical phraseology (compare 1 Samuel 4.21, "The glory is departed from Israel"), just as he was with Shakespearean phraseology (compare to the end of Ch. 33, where the echo is verbal, not particularly thematic).

that any mere sailor of the Pequod had a grudge against Flask in Flask's official capacity, all that sailor had to do, in order to obtain ample vengeance, was to go aft at dinner-time, and get a peep at Flask through the cabin skylight,[2] sitting silly and dumfoundered before awful Ahab.

Now, Ahab and his three mates formed what may be called the first table in the Pequod's cabin. After their departure, taking place in inverted order to their arrival, the canvas cloth was cleared, or rather was restored to some hurried order by the pallid steward. And then the three harpooneers were bidden to the feast, they being its residuary legatees.[3] They made a sort of temporary servants' hall of the high and mighty cabin.

In strange contrast to the hardly tolerable constraint and nameless invisible domineerings of the captain's table, was the entire care-free license and ease, the almost frantic democracy of those inferior fellows the harpooneers. While their masters, the mates, seemed afraid of the sound of the hinges of their own jaws, the harpooneers chewed their food with such a relish that there was a report to it. They dined like lords; they filled their bellies like Indian ships[4] all day loading with spices. Such portentous appetites had Queequeg and Tashtego, that to fill out the vacancies made by the previous repast, often the pale Dough-Boy was fain to bring on a great baron of salt-junk,[5] seemingly quarried out of the solid ox. And if he were not lively about it, if he did not go with a nimble hop-skip-and-jump, then Tashtego had an ungentlemanly way of accelerating him by darting a fork at his back, harpoon-wise. And once Daggoo, seized with a sudden humor, assisted Dough-Boy's memory by snatching him up bodily, and thrusting his head into a great empty wooden trencher, while Tashtego, knife in hand, began laying out the circle preliminary to scalping him. He was naturally a very nervous, shuddering sort of little fellow, this bread-faced steward; the progeny of a bankrupt baker and a hospital nurse. And what with the standing spectacle of the black terrific Ahab, and the periodical tumultuous visitations of these three savages, Dough-Boy's whole life was one continual lip-quiver. Commonly, after seeing the harpooneers furnished with all things they demanded, he would escape from their clutches into his little pantry adjoining, and fearfully peep out at them through the blinds of its door, till all was over.

It was a sight to see Queequeg seated over against Tashtego, opposing his filed teeth to the Indian's: crosswise to them, Daggoo seated on the floor, for a bench would have brought his hearse-plumed head to the low carlines;[6] at every motion of his colossal limbs, making the low cabin framework to shake, as when an African elephant goes passenger in a ship. But for all this, the great negro was wonderfully abstemious, not to say dainty. It seemed hardly possible that by such comparatively small mouthfuls he could keep up the vitality diffused through so broad, baronial, and superb a person. But, doubtless, this noble savage fed strong and drank

2. This sentence offers one realistic suggestion of how Ishmael, a "mere sailor," could know something of what goes on in the cabin table scene, but see the last sentence of Ch. 33 or the whole of Ch. 46 for a better explanation of Ishmael's freedom to create as he comprehends his story.
3. Those who get what's left after payment of a will's specific bequests.
4. Large European ships, or "Indiamen" (often with high stern decks, or poop decks, forming the roof of the captain's cabin), in the East India trade, such as the three boarded and sacked during the Boston Tea Party (December 1773), in which Melville's paternal grandfather participated.
5. Two rib racks of salted beef.
6. Daggoo's bushy black hair (like plumes then displayed on hearses) would bump the ceiling's lower beams ("carlines").

deep of the abounding element of air; and through his dilated nostrils snuffed in the sublime life of the worlds. Not by beef or by bread, are giants made or nourished. But Queequeg, he had a mortal, barbaric smack of the lip in eating—an ugly sound enough—so much so, that the trembling Dough-Boy almost looked to see whether any marks of teeth lurked in his own lean arms. And when he would hear Tashtego singing out for him to produce himself, that his bones might be picked, the simple-witted Steward all but shattered the crockery hanging round him in the pantry, by his sudden fits of the palsy. Nor did the whetstones which the harpooneers carried in their pockets, for their lances and other weapons; and with which whetstones, at dinner, they would ostentatiously sharpen their knives; that grating sound did not at all tend to tranquillize poor Dough-Boy. How could he forget that in his Island days, Queequeg, for one, must certainly have been guilty of some murderous, convivial indiscretions. Alas! Dough-Boy! hard fares the white waiter who waits upon cannibals. Not a napkin should he carry on his arm, but a buckler. In good time, though, to his great delight, the three salt-sea warriors would rise and depart; to his credulous, fable-mongering ears, all their martial bones jingling[7] in them at every step, like Moorish scimiters in scabbards.

But, though these barbarians dined in the cabin, and nominally lived there; still, being anything but sedentary in their habits, they were scarcely ever in it except at meal-times, and just before sleeping-time, when they passed through it to their own peculiar[8] quarters.

In this one matter, Ahab seemed no exception to most American whale captains, who, as a set, rather incline to the opinion that by rights the ship's cabin belongs to them; and that it is by courtesy alone that anybody else is, at any time, permitted there. So that, in real truth, the mates and harpooneers of the Pequod might more properly be said to have lived out of the cabin than in it. For when they did enter it, it was something as a street-door enters a house; turning inwards for a moment, only to be turned out the next; and, as a permanent thing, residing in the open air. Nor did they lose much hereby; in the cabin was no companionship; socially, Ahab was inaccessible. Though nominally included in the census of Christendom, he was still an alien to it. He lived in the world, as the last of the Grisly Bears lived in settled Missouri. And as when Spring and Summer had departed, that wild Logan of the woods, burying himself in the hollow of a tree, lived out the winter there, sucking his own paws; so, in his inclement, howling[9] old age, Ahab's soul, shut up in the caved trunk of his body, there fed upon the sullen paws of its gloom!

CHAPTER 35

THE MAST-HEAD

It was during the more pleasant weather, that in due rotation with the other seamen my first mast-head came round.

7. Dough-boy, whose own bones seem to rattle in fear within him, imagines that he hears the powerful warlike bones of the harpooners scraping together as they move.
8. Private (not odd).
9. Desolate. Logan was an 18th-century Indian chief noted for defiance of peace overtures from the colonists, here likened to a hibernating bear in the wilderness.

In most American whalemen the mast-heads are manned almost simultaneously with the vessel's leaving her port; even though she may have fifteen thousand miles, and more, to sail ere reaching her proper cruising ground. And if, after a three, four, or five years' voyage she is drawing nigh home with anything empty in her—say, an empty vial even—then, her mast-heads are kept manned to the last; and not till her skysail-poles[1] sail in among the spires of the port, does she altogether relinquish the hope of capturing one whale more.

Now, as the business of standing mast-heads, ashore or afloat, is a very ancient and interesting one, let us in some measure expatiate here. I take it, that the earliest standers of mast-heads were the old Egyptians;[2] because, in all my researches, I find none prior to them. For though their progenitors, the builders of Babel,[3] must doubtless, by their tower, have intended to rear the loftiest mast-head in all Asia, or Africa either; yet (ere the final truck was put to it) as that great stone mast of theirs may be said to have gone by the board, in the dread gale of God's wrath; therefore, we cannot give these Babel builders priority over the Egyptians. And that the Egyptians were a nation of mast-head standers, is an assertion based upon the general belief among archæologists, that the first pyramids were founded for astronomical purposes: a theory singularly supported by the peculiar stair-like[4] formation of all four sides of those edifices; whereby, with prodigious long upliftings of their legs, those old astronomers were wont to mount to the apex, and sing out for new stars; even as the look-outs of a modern ship sing out for a sail, or a whale just bearing in sight. In Saint Stylites, the famous Christian hermit of old times, who built him a lofty stone pillar in the desert and spent the whole latter portion of his life on its summit,[5] hoisting his food from the ground with a tackle; in him we have a remarkable instance of a dauntless stander-of-mast-heads; who was not to be driven from his place by fogs or frosts, rain, hail, or sleet; but valiantly facing everything out to the last, literally died at his post. Of modern standers-of-mast-heads we have but a lifeless set; mere stone, iron, and bronze men; who, though well capable of facing out a stiff gale, are still entirely incompetent to the business of singing out upon discovering any strange sight. There is Napoleon; who, upon the top of the column of Vendome, stands with arms folded, some one hundred and fifty feet in the air; careless, now, who rules the decks below; whether Louis Philippe, Louis Blanc, or Louis the Devil.[6] Great Washington, too, stands high aloft on his towering main-mast in Baltimore, and like one of Hercules'

1. Highest portion of masts.
2. Vincent (1949) calls this chapter "a nostalgic-ironic remembrance . . . embellished with pseudo-history and parody" (p. 146); its sources are Macy (1835), Browne (1846), and Scoresby (1820) as well as personal experience.
3. In Genesis 11.1–9, "the whole earth was of one language, and of one speech," until men in the plain of Shinar began to build a tower, the top of which was intended to "reach unto heaven," whereupon the Lord resolved to "confound the language" and "scatter them abroad."
4. The jocularly treated pyramids were not built to be like stairs and became so only when stripped of their original smooth facing.
5. Saint Simeon Stylites, 5th-century Syrian ascetic hermit, called "stylites" because he lived on a stylite, or pillar.
6. Refers satirically to Louis Napoleon Bonaparte (the first English edition reads "Louis Napoleon"), president of France (1848–52) during the composition of *Moby-Dick*, later Emperor Napoleon III. In Paris in December 1849 Melville saw the column of Vendome, which Napoleon I erected to commemorate his victory at the Battle of Austerlitz (1805). Louis Philippe was king of France 1830–48. Louis Blanc (1811–1882) was a French socialist politician and journalist.

pillars,[7] his column marks that point of human grandeur beyond which few mortals will go. Admiral Nelson, also, on a capstan of gun-metal, stands his mast-head in Trafalgar Square;[8] and even when most obscured by that London smoke, token is yet given that a hidden hero is there; for where there is smoke, must be fire.[9] But neither great Washington, nor Napoleon, nor Nelson, will answer a single hail from below, however madly invoked to befriend by their counsels the distracted decks upon which they gaze; however, it may be surmised, that their spirits penetrate through the thick haze of the future, and descry what shoals and what rocks must be shunned.

It may seem unwarrantable to couple in any respect the mast-head standers of the land with those of the sea; but that in truth it is not so, is plainly evinced by an item for which Obed Macy,[1] the sole historian of Nantucket, stands accountable. The worthy Obed tells us, that in the early times of the whale fishery, ere ships were regularly launched in pursuit of the game, the people of that island erected lofty spars along the sea-coast, to which the look-outs ascended by means of nailed cleats, something as fowls go upstairs in a hen-house.[2] A few years ago this same plan was adopted by the Bay whalemen of New Zealand, who, upon descrying the game, gave notice to the ready-manned boats nigh the beach. But this custom has now become obsolete; turn we then to the one proper mast-head, that of a whale-ship at sea.

The three mast-heads are kept manned from sun-rise to sun-set; the seamen taking their regular turns (as at the helm), and relieving each other every two hours. In the serene weather of the tropics it is exceedingly pleasant—the mast-head; nay, to a dreamy meditative man it is delightful. There you stand, a hundred feet above the silent decks, striding along the deep, as if the masts were gigantic stilts, while beneath you and between your legs, as it were, swim the hugest monsters of the sea, even as ships once sailed between the boots of the famous Colossus at old Rhodes.[3] There you stand, lost in the infinite series of the sea, with nothing ruffled but the waves. The tranced ship indolently rolls; the drowsy trade winds blow; everything resolves you into languor. For the most part, in this tropic whaling life, a sublime uneventfulness invests you; you hear no news; read no gazettes; extras with startling accounts of commonplaces never delude you into unnecessary excitements; you hear of no domestic afflictions; bankrupt securities; fall of stocks; are never troubled with the thought of what you shall have for dinner—for all your meals for three years and more are snugly stowed in casks, and your bill of fare is immutable.

In one of those southern whalemen, on a long three or four years' voyage, as often happens, the sum of the various hours you spend at the mast-head would amount to several entire months. And it is much to be deplored that the place to which you devote so considerable a portion of

7. Rocks on the Spanish and African coasts at the entrance to the Mediterranean Sea. Melville may have seen the statue of George Washington in Baltimore in 1847.
8. Melville saw this statue in London in 1849. See p. 43, n. 8.
9. One of the more dubious proverbs in the book.
1. *History of Nantucket* (1835), p. 31.
2. The rest of this paragraph draws from Browne (1846).
3. Ancient bronze statue of the sun god Helios, later supposed to have been so large as to have straddled the harbor of the Greek island of Rhodes; famous as one of the Seven Wonders of the World.

the whole term of your natural life, should be so sadly destitute of anything approaching to a cosy inhabitiveness, or adapted to breed a comfortable localness of feeling, such as pertains to a bed, a hammock, a hearse, a sentry box, a pulpit, a coach, or any other of those small and snug contrivances in which men temporarily isolate themselves. Your most usual point of perch is the head of the t' gallant-mast, where you stand upon two thin parallel sticks (almost peculiar to whalemen) called the t' gallant cross-trees. Here, tossed about by the sea, the beginner feels about as cosy as he would standing on a bull's horns. To be sure, in coolish weather you may carry your house aloft with you, in the shape of a watch-coat; but properly speaking the thickest watch-coat is no more of a house than the unclad body; for as the soul is glued inside of its fleshly tabernacle,[4] and cannot freely move about in it, nor even move out of it, without running great risk of perishing (like an ignorant pilgrim crossing the snowy Alps in winter); so a watch-coat is not so much of a house as it is a mere envelope, or additional skin encasing you. You cannot put a shelf or chest of drawers in your body, and no more can you make a convenient closet of your watch-coat.

Concerning all this, it is much to be deplored that the mast-heads of a southern whale ship are unprovided with those enviable little tents or pulpits, called *crow's-nests,* in which the look-outs of a Greenland whaler are protected from the inclement weather of the frozen seas. In the fire-side narrative of Captain Sleet,[5] entitled "A Voyage among the Icebergs, in quest of the Greenland Whale, and incidentally for the re-discovery of the Lost Icelandic Colonies of Old Greenland;" in this admirable volume, all standers of mast-heads are furnished with a charmingly circumstantial account of the then recently invented *crow's-nest* of the Glacier, which was the name of Captain Sleet's good craft. He called it the *Sleet's crow's-nest*, in honor of himself; he being the original inventor and patentee, and free from all ridiculous false delicacy, and holding that if we call our own children after our own names (we fathers being the original inventors and patentees), so likewise should we denominate after ourselves any other apparatus we may beget. In shape, the Sleet's crow's-nest is something like a large tierce or pipe;[6] it is open above, however, where it is furnished with a movable side-screen to keep to windward of your head in a hard gale. Being fixed on the summit of the mast, you ascend into it through a little trap-hatch in the bottom. On the after side, or side next the stern of the ship, is a comfortable seat, with a locker underneath for umbrellas, comforters, and coats. In front is a leather rack, in which to keep your speaking trumpet, pipe, telescope, and other nautical conveniences. When Captain Sleet in person stood his mast-head in this crow's nest of his, he tells us that he always had a rifle with him (also fixed in the rack), together with a powder flask and shot, for the purpose of popping off the stray narwhales, or vagrant sea unicorns infesting those waters; for you cannot successfully shoot at them from the deck owing to the resistance of the water, but to shoot down upon them is a very different thing. Now, it was

4. For tabernacle in the sense of body, see 2 Peter 1.13–14.
5. Another of Melville's comic names for William Scoresby Jr., in whose *Account of the Arctic Regions* (1820) the inventor of the crow's nest is his father. Melville's compressed parody attributes the father's invention to the son.
6. A wine cask that holds 126 gallons. "Tierce": a wine cask that holds 42 gallons.

plainly a labor of love for Captain Sleet to describe, as he does, all the little detailed conveniences of his crow's-nest; but though he so enlarges upon many of these, and though he treats us to a very scientific account of his experiments in this crow's-nest, with a small compass he kept there for the purpose of counteracting the errors resulting from what is called the "local attraction" of all binnacle magnets; an error ascribable to the horizontal vicinity of the iron in the ship's planks, and in the Glacier's case, perhaps, to there having been so many broken-down black-smiths among her crew; I say, that though the Captain is very discreet and scientific here, yet, for all his learned "binnacle deviations," "azimuth compass observations," and "approximate errors," he knows very well, Captain Sleet, that he was not so much immersed in those profound magnetic meditations, as to fail being attracted occasionally towards that well replenished little case-bottle,[7] so nicely tucked in on one side of his crow's nest, within easy reach of his hand. Though, upon the whole, I greatly admire and even love the brave, the honest, and learned Captain; yet I take it very ill of him that he should so utterly ignore that case-bottle, seeing what a faithful friend and comforter it must have been, while with mittened fingers and hooded head he was studying the mathematics aloft there in that bird's nest within three or four perches[8] of the pole.

But if we Southern whale-fishers are not so snugly housed aloft as Captain Sleet and his Greenland-men were; yet that disadvantage is greatly counterbalanced by the widely contrasting serenity of those seductive seas in which we Southern fishers mostly float. For one, I used to lounge up the rigging very leisurely, resting in the top to have a chat with Queequeg, or any one else off duty whom I might find there; then ascending a little way further, and throwing a lazy leg over the top-sail yard, take a preliminary view of the watery pastures, and so at last mount to my ultimate destination.

Let me make a clean breast of it here, and frankly admit that I kept but sorry guard. With the problem of the universe revolving in me, how could I—being left completely to myself at such a thought-engendering altitude,—how could I but lightly hold my obligations to observe all whale-ships' standing orders, "Keep your weather eye open, and sing out every time."

And let me in this place movingly admonish you, ye ship-owners of Nantucket! Beware of enlisting in your vigilant fisheries any lad with lean brow and hollow eye; given to unseasonable meditativeness; and who offers to ship with the Phædon instead of Bowditch[9] in his head. Beware of such an one, I say: your whales must be seen before they can be killed; and this sunken-eyed young Platonist will tow you ten wakes round the world, and never make you one pint of sperm the richer. Nor are these monitions at all unneeded. For nowadays, the whale-fishery furnishes an asylum for many romantic, melancholy, and absent-minded young men, disgusted

7. Small flask, square to fit into a case.
8. Humorously meaning three or four resting places for a bird in flight, but as a unit of measurement, Melville knew, a perch is five and a half yards.
9. Nathaniel Bowditch's *New American Practical Navigator* (1802) was the standard handbook on every ship. In Plato's *Phædo*, Socrates, facing his own death, argues that the soul is immortal because the mind is independent of the physical senses.

with the carking cares of earth, and seeking sentiment in tar and blubber. Childe Harold not unfrequently perches himself upon the mast-head of some luckless disappointed whale-ship, and in moody phrase ejaculates:—

> "Roll on, thou deep and dark blue ocean, roll!
> Ten thousand blubber-hunters sweep over thee in vain."[1]

Very often do the captains of such ships take those absent-minded young philosophers to task, upbraiding them with not feeling sufficient "interest" in the voyage; half-hinting that they are so hopelessly lost to all honorable ambition, as that in their secret souls they would rather not see whales than otherwise. But all in vain; those young Platonists have a notion that their vision is imperfect; they are short-sighted; what use, then, to strain the visual nerve? They have left their opera-glasses at home.

"Why, thou monkey," said a harpooneer to one of these lads, "we've been cruising now hard upon three years, and thou hast not raised a whale yet. Whales are scarce as hen's teeth[2] whenever thou art up here." Perhaps they were; or perhaps there might have been shoals[3] of them in the far horizon; but lulled into such an opium-like listlessness of vacant, unconscious reverie is this absent minded youth by the blending cadence of waves with thoughts, that at last he loses his identity; takes the mystic ocean at his feet for the visible image of that deep, blue, bottomless soul,[4] pervading mankind and nature; and every strange, half-seen, gliding, beautiful thing that eludes him; every dimly-discovered, uprising fin of some undiscernible form, seems to him the embodiment of those elusive thoughts that only people the soul by continually flitting through it. In this enchanted mood, thy spirit ebbs away to whence it came; becomes diffused through time and space; like Wickliff's sprinkled Pantheistic ashes, forming at last a part of every shore the round globe over.[5]

There is no life in thee, now, except that rocking life imparted by a gently rolling ship; by her, borrowed from the sea; by the sea, from the inscrutable tides of God. But while this sleep, this dream is on ye, move your foot or hand an inch; slip your hold at all; and your identity comes back in horror. Over Descartian vortices[6] you hover. And perhaps, at mid-day, in the fairest weather, with one half-throttled shriek you drop through that transparent air into the summer sea, no more to rise for ever. Heed it well, ye Pantheists!

1. Lord Byron's *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* (1813–14), canto 4, stz. 179: "Ten thousand fleets sweep over thee in vain." As a boy, Melville memorized such passages, and as late as 1861 he set himself to "learn by heart" a passage from Byron's *The Island, or Christian and His Comrades* (1823), a poetical retelling of the famous mutiny on the *Bounty*. *Christian* in the title refers to the mutineer Christian Fletcher.
2. Proverbial (hens have no teeth).
3. Schools, or large pods of whales.
4. In the mystic experience, the individual soul seems to blend with the universe. This Platonic philosophical theme was being popularized in Melville's time by Emerson's essays, such as "The Oversoul."
5. An emendation of the first edition. The body of the 14th-century English religious reformer John Wickliff was exhumed and burned, and the ashes cast into a brook. From the later historian Thomas Fuller came the fancy that they floated to the ocean and spread worldwide, like his doctrines. The first American edition read "Cranmer's," a mistaken reference to another martyr, Thomas Cranmer (1489–1556), whose ashes, however, were not cast into a brook.
6. René Descartes (1596–1650) theorized that the physical universe is made up of innumerable vortices.

CHAPTER 36

THE QUARTER-DECK

(Enter Ahab: Then, all.)

It was not a great while after the affair of the pipe, that one morning shortly after breakfast, Ahab, as was his wont, ascended the cabin-gangway to the deck. There most sea-captains usually walk at that hour, as country gentlemen, after the same meal, take a few turns in the garden.

Soon his steady, ivory stride was heard, as to and fro he paced his old rounds, upon planks so familiar to his tread, that they were all over dented, like geological stones, with the peculiar mark of his walk. Did you fixedly gaze, too, upon that ribbed and dented brow; there also, you would see still stranger foot-prints—the foot-prints of his one unsleeping, ever-pacing thought.

But on the occasion in question, those dents looked deeper, even as his nervous step that morning left a deeper mark. And, so full of his thought was Ahab, that at every uniform turn that he made, now at the main-mast and now at the binnacle, you could almost see that thought turn in him as he turned, and pace in him as he paced; so completely possessing him, indeed, that it all but seemed the inward mould of every outer movement.

"D'ye mark him, Flask?" whispered Stubb; "the chick that's in him pecks the shell. 'Twill soon be out."

The hours wore on;—Ahab now shut up within his cabin; anon, pacing the deck, with the same intense bigotry of purpose[1] in his aspect.

It drew near the close of day. Suddenly he came to a halt by the bulwarks, and inserting his bone leg into the auger-hole there, and with one hand grasping a shroud, he ordered Starbuck to send everybody aft.

"Sir!" said the mate, astonished at an order seldom or never given on ship-board except in some extraordinary case.

"Send everybody aft," repeated Ahab. "Mast-heads, there! come down!"

When the entire ship's company were assembled, and with curious and not wholly unapprehensive faces, were eyeing him, for he looked not unlike the weather horizon[2] when a storm is coming up, Ahab, after rapidly glancing over the bulwarks, and then darting his eyes among the crew, started from his stand-point; and as though not a soul were nigh him resumed his heavy turns upon the deck. With bent head and half-slouched hat he continued to pace, unmindful of the wondering whispering among the men; till Stubb cautiously whispered to Flask, that Ahab must have summoned them there for the purpose of witnessing a pedestrian feat. But this did not last long. Vehemently pausing, he cried:—

"What do ye do when ye see a whale, men?"

"Sing out for him!" was the impulsive rejoinder from a score of clubbed voices.

"Good!" cried Ahab, with a wild approval in his tones; observing the hearty animation into which his unexpected question had so magnetically thrown them.

1. Obsessive, unreasoning attachment to one's own beliefs.
2. The one from which the wind is bringing the weather.

"And what do ye next, men?"

"Lower away, and after him!"

"And what tune is it ye pull to, men?"

"A dead whale or a stove boat!"[3]

More and more strangely and fiercely glad and approving, grew the countenance of the old man at every shout; while the mariners began to gaze curiously at each other, as if marvelling how it was that they themselves became so excited at such seemingly purposeless questions.

But, they were all eagerness again, as Ahab, now half-revolving in his pivot-hole, with one hand reaching high up a shroud, and tightly, almost convulsively grasping it, addressed them thus:—

"All ye mast-headers have before now heard me give orders about a white whale. Look ye! d'ye see this Spanish ounce of gold?"[4]—holding up a broad bright coin to the sun—"it is a sixteen dollar piece, men,—a doubloon. D'ye see it? Mr. Starbuck, hand me yon top-maul."

While the mate was getting the hammer, Ahab, without speaking, was slowly rubbing the gold piece against the skirts of his jacket, as if to heighten its lustre, and without using any words was meanwhile lowly humming to himself, producing a sound so strangely muffled and inarticulate that it seemed the mechanical humming of the wheels of his vitality in him.

Receiving the top-maul from Starbuck, he advanced towards the main-mast with the hammer uplifted in one hand, exhibiting the gold with the other, and with a high raised voice exclaiming: "Whosoever of ye raises me a white-headed whale with a wrinkled brow and a crooked jaw; whosoever of ye raises me that white-headed whale, with three holes punctured in his starboard fluke—look ye, whosoever of ye raises me that same white whale, he shall have this gold ounce, my boys!"

"Huzza! huzza!" cried the seamen, as with swinging tarpaulins[5] they hailed the act of nailing the gold to the mast.

"It's a white whale, I say," resumed Ahab, as he threw down the top-maul; "a white whale. Skin your eyes for him, men; look sharp for white water; if ye see but a bubble, sing out."

All this while Tashtego, Daggoo, and Queequeg had looked on with even more intense interest and surprise than the rest, and at the mention of the wrinkled brow and crooked jaw they had started as if each was separately touched by some specific recollection.

"Captain Ahab," said Tashtego, "that white whale must be the same that some call Moby Dick."

"Moby Dick?" shouted Ahab. "Do ye know the white whale then, Tash?"

"Does he fan-tail[6] a little curious, sir, before he goes down?" said the Gay-Header deliberately.

"And has he a curious spout, too," said Daggoo, "very bushy, even for a parmacetty, and mighty quick, Captain Ahab?"

"And he have one, two, tree—oh! good many iron in him hide, too, Captain," cried Queequeg disjointedly, "all twiske-tee betwisk, like him—him—" faltering hard for a word, and screwing his hand round and round as though uncorking a bottle—"like him—him—"

3. Pithily stated options for the boat's crew: to kill a whale or be wrecked trying.
4. An Ecuadorian gold *onza* ("ounce") then worth sixteen Spanish silver dollars.
5. Tarred hats, swung in approval.
6. Wave his broad, fan-shaped tail.

"Corkscrew!" cried Ahab, "aye, Queequeg, the harpoons lie all twisted and wrenched in him; aye, Daggoo, his spout is a big one, like a whole shock of wheat, and white as a pile of our Nantucket wool after the great annual sheep-shearing; aye, Tashtego, and he fan-tails like a split jib[7] in a squall. Death and devils! men, it is Moby Dick ye have seen—Moby Dick—Moby Dick!"

"Captain Ahab," said Starbuck, who, with Stubb and Flask, had thus far been eyeing his superior with increasing surprise, but at last seemed struck with a thought which somewhat explained all the wonder. "Captain Ahab, I have heard of Moby Dick—but it was not Moby Dick that took off thy leg?"

"Who told thee that?"[8] cried Ahab; then pausing, "Aye, Starbuck; aye, my hearties all round; it was Moby Dick that dismasted me; Moby Dick that brought me to this dead stump I stand on now. Aye, aye," he shouted with a terrific, loud, animal sob, like that of a heart-stricken moose; "Aye, aye! it was that accursed white whale that razeed[9] me; made a poor pegging lubber of me for ever and a day!" Then tossing both arms, with measureless imprecations he shouted out: "Aye, aye! and I'll chase him round Good Hope, and round the Horn, and round the Norway Maelstrom, and round perdition's flames before I give him up. And this is what ye have shipped for, men! to chase that white whale on both sides of land,[1] and over all sides of earth, till he spouts black blood and rolls fin out. What say ye, men, will ye splice hands on it, now? I think ye do look brave."

"Aye, aye!" shouted the harpooneers and seamen, running closer to the excited old man: "A sharp eye for the White Whale; a sharp lance for Moby Dick!"

"God bless ye," he seemed to half sob and half shout. "God bless ye, men. Steward! go draw the great measure of grog.[2] But what's this long face about, Mr. Starbuck; wilt thou not chase the white whale? art not game for Moby Dick?"

"I am game for his crooked jaw, and for the jaws of Death too, Captain Ahab, if it fairly comes in the way of the business we follow; but I came here to hunt whales, not my commander's vengeance. How many barrels will thy vengeance yield thee even if thou gettest it, Captain Ahab? it will not fetch thee much in our Nantucket market."

"Nantucket market! Hoot! But come closer, Starbuck; thou requirest a little lower layer.[3] If money's to be the measurer, man, and the accountants have computed their great counting-house the globe, by girdling it with guineas,[4] one to every three parts of an inch; then, let me tell thee, that my vengeance will fetch a great premium *here*!"

"He smites his chest," whispered Stubb, "what's that for? methinks it rings most vast, but hollow."

7. Triangular sail that stretches from the fore-topmast to the jib boom, torn and flapping.
8. The self-obsessed Ahab fails to realize that his previous crew had told the story throughout Nantucket and beyond.
9. Sawed off, cut down in height, making him like a limping landman.
1. I.e., both the Atlantic and Pacific sides of the Americas. "Maelstrom": tidal whirlpool off Norway.
2. Large pewter utensil for a measured standard amount, here of watered-down rum.
3. Deeper layer of explanation.
4. English gold coins valued at a pound plus one shilling. Melville images a guinea as being three quarters of an inch in diameter.

"Vengeance on a dumb brute!" cried Starbuck, "that simply smote thee from blindest instinct! Madness! To be enraged with a dumb thing, Captain Ahab, seems blasphemous."[5]

"Hark ye yet again,—the little lower layer. All visible objects, man, are but as pasteboard masks. But in each event—in the living act, the undoubted deed—there, some unknown but still reasoning thing puts forth the mouldings of its features from behind the unreasoning mask. If man will strike, strike through the mask! How can the prisoner reach outside except by thrusting through the wall? To me, the white whale is that wall, shoved near to me.[6] Sometimes I think there's naught beyond. But 'tis enough. He tasks me; he heaps me; I see in him outrageous strength, with an inscrutable malice sinewing it. That inscrutable thing is chiefly what I hate; and be the white whale agent, or be the white whale principal, I will wreak that hate upon him. Talk not to me of blasphemy, man; I'd strike the sun if it insulted me. For could the sun do that, then could I do the other; since there is ever a sort of fair play herein, jealously presiding over all creations. But not my master, man, is even that fair play. Who's over me? Truth hath no confines. Take off thine eye! more intolerable than fiends' glarings is a doltish stare! So, so; thou reddenest and palest; my heat has melted thee to anger-glow. But look ye, Starbuck, what is said in heat, that thing unsays itself. There are men from whom warm words are small indignity. I meant not to incense thee. Let it go. Look! see yonder Turkish cheeks of spotted tawn[7]—living, breathing pictures painted by the sun. The Pagan leopards—the unrecking and unworshipping things, that live; and seek, and give no reasons for the torrid life they feel! The crew, man, the crew! Are they not one and all with Ahab, in this matter of the whale? See Stubb! he laughs! See yonder Chilian! he snorts to think of it. Stand up amid the general hurricane, thy one tost sapling cannot, Starbuck! And what is it? Reckon it. 'Tis but to help strike a fin; no wondrous feat for Starbuck. What is it more? From this one poor hunt, then, the best lance out of all Nantucket, surely he will not hang back, when every foremast-hand has clutched a whetstone?[8] Ah! constrainings seize thee; I see! the billow lifts thee! Speak, but speak!—Aye, aye! thy silence, then, *that* voices thee. (*Aside*) Something shot from my dilated nostrils, he has inhaled it in his lungs. Starbuck now is mine; cannot oppose me now, without rebellion."

"God keep me!—keep us all!" murmured Starbuck, lowly.

But in his joy at the enchanted,[9] tacit acquiescence of the mate, Ahab did not hear his foreboding invocation; nor yet the low laugh from the

5. Blasphemous because Ahab is usurping a privilege of God: "Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord" (Romans 12.19).
6. Ahab sees the whale not, like Starbuck, as just an animal acting on instinct, but as the embodiment or agent of some power outside the physical world of visible nature but acting in it as from behind a "pasteboard mask" or "wall." In orthodox Christian theology, both God and the devil are such powers, in conflict, but here it seems uncertain from his own words which one Ahab (clearly unorthodox) is attacking as evilly responsible for his own sufferings and those of mankind. Ahab's theory is that while man cannot strike that spiritual power itself, he can strike at it by striking "through the mask," like a prisoner "thrusting through the wall"—that wall, to Ahab, is Moby Dick.
7. Tan. "Turkish": bloodthirsty (a residue of the portrayal of Turks during the Greek struggle for independence, in Melville's childhood).
8. For sharpening lances and other weapons.
9. Something within Starbuck ("constrainings," previous paragraph) makes him yield, "enchanted" by Ahab's superior force, the initial "abasement" and "fall of valor in the soul" so sorrowfully anticipated by Ishmael in Ch. 26.

hold; nor yet the presaging vibrations of the winds in the cordage; nor yet the hollow flap of the sails against the masts, as for a moment their hearts sank in. For again Starbuck's downcast eyes lighted up with the stubbornness of life; the subterranean laugh died away; the winds blew on; the sails filled out; the ship heaved and rolled as before. Ah, ye admonitions and warnings! why stay ye not when ye come? But rather are ye predictions than warnings, ye shadows! Yet not so much predictions from without, as verifications of the foregoing things within. For with little external to constrain us, the innermost necessities in our being, these still drive us on.

"The measure! the measure!" cried Ahab.

Receiving the brimming pewter, and turning to the harpooneers, he ordered them to produce their weapons. Then ranging them before him near the capstan, with their harpoons in their hands, while his three mates stood at his side with their lances, and the rest of the ship's company formed a circle round the group; he stood for an instant searchingly eyeing every man of his crew. But those wild eyes met his, as the bloodshot eyes of the prairie wolves meet the eye of their leader, ere he rushes on at their head in the trail of the bison; but, alas! only to fall into the hidden snare of the Indian.

"Drink and pass!" he cried, handing the heavy charged flagon to the nearest seaman. "The crew alone now drink. Round with it, round! Short draughts—long swallows, men; 'tis hot as Satan's hoof. So, so; it goes round excellently. It spiralizes in ye; forks out at the serpent-snapping eye. Well done; almost drained. That way it went, this way it comes. Hand it me—here's a hollow! Men, ye seem the years; so brimming life is gulped and gone. Steward, refill!

"Attend now, my braves. I have mustered ye all round this capstan; and ye mates, flank me with your lances; and ye harpooneers, stand there with your irons; and ye, stout mariners, ring me in, that I may in some sort revive a noble custom of my fisherman fathers before me.[1] O men, you will yet see that—Ha! boy, come back? bad pennies come not sooner.[2] Hand it me. Why, now, this pewter had run brimming again, wert not thou St. Vitus'[3] imp—away, thou ague!

"Advance, ye mates! Cross your lances full before me.[4] Well done! Let me touch the axis." So saying, with extended arm, he grasped the three level, radiating lances at their crossed centre; while so doing, suddenly and nervously twitched them; meanwhile, glancing intently from Starbuck to Stubb; from Stubb to Flask. It seemed as though, by some nameless, interior volition, he would fain have shocked into them the same fiery emotion accumulated within the Leyden jar[5] of his own magnetic life. The three

1. Mansfield and Vincent, pp. 687–88, show that Melville found the old custom of drinking from harpoon sockets in Robert Pearse Gillies, *Tales of a Voyager to the Arctic Ocean*, 1st series, 1 (1826), pp. 251–52.
2. Proverbially, when you pay for something with a bad penny, sooner or later it comes back to you in your change.
3. St. Vitus's dance is a spasmodic muscular jerking, also called chorea. Ahab blames the steward for spilling some of the rum.
4. Melville knew an oath-taking ritual from Shakespeare (Hamlet makes Horatio and Marcellus swear on his sword in *Hamlet*, 1.5.146), but he could have seen it elsewhere, perhaps in a print of Jacques Louis David's 1784 painting, *The Oath of the Horatii*.
5. In early experiments with electric circuits, a glass jar lined with tinfoil with a conducting rod passing through an insulated stopper. Ahab likens himself to this apparatus. In a popular demonstration of conductivity, a scientist would administer a shock from it that ran through a group of people holding hands.

mates quailed before his strong, sustained, and mystic aspect. Stubb and Flask looked sideways from him; the honest eye of Starbuck fell downright.

"In vain!" cried Ahab; "but, maybe, 'tis well. For did ye three but once take the full-forced shock, then mine own electric thing, *that* had perhaps expired from out me. Perchance, too, it would have dropped ye dead. Perchance ye need it not. Down lances! And now, ye mates, I do appoint ye three cup-bearers to my three pagan kinsmen there—yon three most honorable gentlemen and noblemen, my valiant harpooneers. Disdain the task? What, when the great Pope washes the feet of beggars, using his tiara for ewer?[6] Oh, my sweet cardinals! your own condescension, *that* shall bend ye to it. I do not order ye; ye will it. Cut your seizings and draw the poles,[7] ye harpooneers!"

Silently obeying the order, the three harpooneers now stood with the detached iron part of their harpoons, some three feet long, held, barbs up, before him.

"Stab me not with that keen steel! Cant them; cant them over! know ye not the goblet end? Turn up the socket! So, so; now, ye cup-bearers, advance. The irons! take them; hold them while I fill!" Forthwith, slowly going from one officer to the other, he brimmed the harpoon sockets with the fiery waters from the pewter.

"Now, three to three, ye stand. Commend the murderous chalices![8] Bestow them, ye who are now made parties to this indissoluble league. Ha! Starbuck! but the deed is done! Yon ratifying sun now waits to sit upon it.[9] Drink, ye harpooneers! drink and swear, ye men that man the deathful whaleboat's bow—Death to Moby Dick! God hunt us all, if we do not hunt Moby Dick to his death!" The long, barbed steel goblets were lifted; and to cries and maledictions against the white whale, the spirits were simultaneously quaffed down with a hiss. Starbuck paled, and turned, and shivered. Once more, and finally, the replenished pewter went the rounds among the frantic crew; when, waving his free hand to them, they all dispersed; and Ahab retired within his cabin.

CHAPTER 37

SUNSET

The cabin; by the stern windows; Ahab sitting alone, and gazing out.

I leave a white and turbid wake; pale waters, paler cheeks, where'er I sail. The envious billows sidelong swell to whelm my track; let them; but first I pass.

Yonder by the ever-brimming goblet's rim, the warm waves blush like wine. The gold brow plumbs the blue. The diver sun—slow dived from

6. Melville images a tiara, a jeweled headband, as cupped so it can hold water, the way an ewer (a basin) does.
7. Ahab parodies the mass for Holy Thursday as celebrated by the pope and cardinals, then orders the harpooneers to cut the ropes ("seizings") that lash the iron and wood parts of their harpoons together.
8. Echo of *Macbeth* 1.7.10–12: "this even-handed justice / Commends the ingredients of our poison'd chalice / To our own lips."
9. Metaphorically the setting sun will "sit," as in an official court session, to ratify the day's deed, so that no one can repudiate the pact.

noon,—goes down; my soul mounts up! she wearies with her endless hill. Is, then, the crown too heavy that I wear? this Iron Crown of Lombardy.[1] Yet is it bright with many a gem; I, the wearer, see not its far flashings; but darkly feel that I wear that, that dazzlingly confounds. 'Tis iron—that I know—not gold. 'Tis split, too—that I feel; the jagged edge galls me so, my brain seems to beat against the solid metal; aye, steel skull, mine; the sort that needs no helmet in the most brain-battering fight!

Dry heat upon my brow? Oh! time was, when as the sunrise nobly spurred me, so the sunset soothed. No more. This lovely light, it lights not me; all loveliness is anguish to me, since I can ne'er enjoy. Gifted with the high perception, I lack the low, enjoying power; damned, most subtly and most malignantly! damned in the midst of Paradise! Good night—good night! (*waving his hand, he moves from the window.*)

'Twas not so hard a task. I thought to find one stubborn, at the least; but my one cogged circle fits into all their various wheels, and they revolve. Or, if you will, like so many ant-hills of powder, they all stand before me; and I their match. Oh, hard! that to fire others, the match itself must needs be wasting! What I've dared, I've willed; and what I've willed, I'll do! They think me mad—Starbuck does; but I'm demoniac, I am madness maddened! That wild madness that's only calm to comprehend itself! The prophecy[2] was that I should be dismembered; and—Aye! I lost this leg. I now prophesy that I will dismember my dismemberer. Now, then, be the prophet and the fulfiller one. That's more than ye, ye great gods,[3] ever were. I laugh and hoot at ye, ye cricket-players, ye pugilists, ye deaf Burkes and blinded Bendigoes![4] I will not say as schoolboys do to bullies,—Take some one of your own size; don't pommel *me!* No, ye've knocked me down, and I am up again; but *ye* have run and hidden. Come forth from behind your cotton bags! I have no long gun[5] to reach ye. Come, Ahab's compliments to ye; come and see if ye can swerve me. Swerve me? ye cannot swerve me, else ye swerve yourselves! man has ye there. Swerve me? The path to my fixed purpose is laid with iron rails, whereon my soul is grooved to run.[6] Over unsounded gorges, through the rifled hearts of mountains, under torrents' beds, unerringly I rush! Naught's an obstacle, naught's an angle to the iron way!

CHAPTER 38

DUSK

By the Mainmast; Starbuck leaning against it.

My soul is more than matched; she's overmanned; and by a madman! Insufferable sting, that sanity should ground arms on such a field! But he

1. Crown used at the coronation of Holy Roman emperors, said to contain a nail from the cross on which Jesus was crucified.
2. As mentioned by Elijah in Ch. 19.
3. Here and elsewhere, Ahab is shown as uncertain which unjust supernatural power or powers he is opposing.
4. Jem ("Deaf") Burke and Bendigo (William Thompson) were English boxing champions in the 1830s and 1840s.
5. Frontiersman's rifle. Another submerged memory of the crucial importance of the Battle of New Orleans (January 1815) in American national consciousness, though here "maddened" Ahab confuses his imagery because it was Andrew Jackson's motley army, including frontiersmen with their long guns, who barricaded behind cotton bales and mud and defeated the British. See p. 98, nn. 9 and 1.
6. Ahab says his soul is a locomotive running on railroad tracks, then a new mode of transportation.

drilled deep down, and blasted all my reason out of me! I think I see his impious end; but feel that I must help him to it. Will I, nill I, the ineffable thing has tied me to him; tows me with a cable I have no knife to cut. Horrible old man! Who's over him, he cries;—aye, he would be a democrat to all above; look, how he lords it over all below! Oh! I plainly see my miserable office,—to obey, rebelling; and worse yet, to hate with touch of pity! For in his eyes I read some lurid woe would shrivel me up, had I it. Yet is there hope. Time and tide flow wide. The hated whale has the round watery world to swim in, as the small gold-fish has its glassy globe. His heaven-insulting purpose, God may wedge aside. I would up heart, were it not like lead. But my whole clock's run down; my heart the all-controlling weight, I have no key to lift again.[1]

[*A burst of revelry from the forecastle.*]

Oh, God! to sail with such a heathen crew that have small touch of human mothers in them! Whelped somewhere by the sharkish sea. The white whale is their demogorgon.[2] Hark! the infernal orgies! that revelry is forward! mark the unfaltering silence aft! Methinks it pictures life. Foremost through the sparkling sea shoots on the gay, embattled, bantering bow, but only to drag dark Ahab after it, where he broods within his sternward cabin, builded over the dead water of the wake, and further on, hunted by its wolfish gurglings. The long howl thrills me through! Peace! ye revellers, and set the watch! Oh, life! 'tis in an hour like this, with soul beat down and held to knowledge,—as wild, untutored things are forced to feed—Oh, life! 'tis now that I do feel the latent horror in thee! but 'tis not me! that horror's out of me! and with the soft feeling of the human in me, yet will I try to fight ye, ye grim, phantom futures! Stand by me, hold me, bind me, O ye blessed influences!

CHAPTER 39

First Night-Watch

FORE-TOP

(*Stubb solus, and mending a brace.*)

Ha! ha! ha! ha! hem! clear my throat!—I've been thinking over it ever since, and that ha, ha's the final consequence. Why so? Because a laugh's the wisest, easiest answer to all that's queer; and come what will, one comfort's always left—that unfailing comfort is, it's all predestinated. I heard not all his talk with Starbuck; but to my poor eye Starbuck then looked something as I the other evening felt. Be sure the old Mogul[1] has fixed him, too. I twigged it, knew it; had had the gift, might readily have prophesied it—for when I clapped my eye upon his skull I saw it. Well, Stubb, *wise* Stubb—that's my title—well, Stubb, what of it, Stubb? Here's a carcase.[2]

1. The descending weight that moves the clock has reached the bottom and Starbuck lacks the heart ("key") to wind it back up.
2. Mythological demonic god (variously treated by Milton, Shelley, and other English poets).
1. Old Mongol ruler; i.e., Ahab.
2. The puzzling word "carcase" may be an error for a short word such as "case"; the term "hard case" was in Melville's vocabulary.

I know not all that may be coming, but be it what it will, I'll go to it laughing. Such a waggish leering as lurks in all your horribles! I feel funny. Fa, la! lirra, skirra![3] What's my juicy little pear at home doing now? Crying its eyes out?—Giving a party to the last arrived harpooners, I dare say, gay as a frigate's pennant, and so am I—fa, la! lira, skirra! Oh—

We'll drink to-night with hearts as light,
To loves, as gay and fleeting
As bubbles that swim, on the beaker's brim,
And break on the lips while meeting.[4]

A brave stave that—who calls? Mr. Starbuck? Aye, aye, sir—(*Aside*) he's my superior, he has his too, if I'm not mistaken.—Aye, aye, sir, just through with this job—coming.

CHAPTER 40

Midnight, Forecastle.

HARPOONERS AND SAILORS.

(*Foresail rises and discovers the watch standing, lounging, leaning, and lying in various attitudes, all singing in chorus.*)

Farewell and adieu to you, Spanish ladies!
Farewell and adieu to you, ladies of Spain!
Our captain's commanded—[1]

1ST NANTUCKET SAILOR.

Oh, boys, don't be sentimental; it's bad for the digestion! Take a tonic, follow me!

(*Sings, and all follow.*)
Our captain stood upon the deck,
A spy-glass in his hand,
A viewing of those gallant whales
That blew at every strand.
Oh, your tubs in your boats, my boys,
And by your braces stand,
And we'll have one of those fine whales,
Hand, boys, over hand!
So, be cheery, my lads! may your hearts never fail!
While the bold harpooner is striking the whale![2]

MATE'S VOICE FROM THE QUARTER-DECK.

Eight bells[3] there, forward!

3. These nonsense lyrics provoke Stubb to wonder about his wife's behavior at home.
4. Stubb sings lines from "Sparkling and Bright," by Melville's friend Charles Fenno Hoffman (1806–1884), the New York novelist and poet who was already, as Melville wrote this, confined in a Pennsylvania madhouse, where he remained.
1. Traditional British naval song dating from the late 18th century.
2. This song is a version of "Captain Bunker."
3. Midnight.

2nd Nantucket Sailor.

Avast the chorus! Eight bells there! d'ye hear, bell-boy? Strike the bell eight, thou Pip! Thou blackling! and let me call the watch. I've the sort of mouth for that—the hogshead mouth.[4] So, so, (*thrusts his head down the scuttle*,) Star—bo-l-e-e-n-s, a-h-o-y! Eight bells there below! Tumble up!

Dutch Sailor.

Grand snoozing to-night, maty; fat night for that. I mark this in our old Mogul's wine; it's quite as deadening to some as filliping to others. We sing; they sleep—aye, lie down there, like ground-tier butts.[5] At 'em again! There, take this copper-pump, and hail 'em through it. Tell 'em to avast dreaming of their lasses. Tell 'em it's the resurrection; they must kiss their last, and come to judgment. That's the way—*that's* it; thy throat ain't spoiled with eating Amsterdam butter.[6]

French Sailor.

Hist, boys! let's have a jig or two before we ride to anchor in Blanket Bay.[7] What say ye? There comes the other watch. Stand by all legs! Pip! little Pip! hurrah with your tambourine!

Pip.

(Sulky and sleepy.)

Don't know where it is.

French Sailor.

Beat thy belly, then, and wag thy ears. Jig it, men, I say; merry's the word; hurrah! Damn me, won't you dance? Form, now, Indian-file, and gallop into the double-shuffle?[8] Throw yourselves! Legs! legs!

Iceland Sailor.

I don't like your floor, maty; it's too springy to my taste. I'm used to ice-floors. I'm sorry to throw cold water on the subject; but excuse me.

Maltese Sailor.

Me too; where's your girls? Who but a fool would take his left hand by his right, and say to himself, how d'ye do? Partners! I must have partners!

Sicilian Sailor.

Aye; girls and a green!—then I'll hop with ye; yea, turn grasshopper!

4. The sailor with a big barrel ("hogshead") of a mouth summons the starboard watch from their sleep below.
5. Casks. The watch is stowed tight together like the bottom layer of oil barrels, not yet stacked to the beams.
6. Kegs of fine "Amsterdam butter" survived the crossing from Holland to merchants in New York City, but the Dutch sailor may be implying that on very long voyages the contents of such kegs might become slightly rancid. See Ch. 101, "The Decanter."
7. When the starboard watch goes on duty, the larboard watch has a dance.
8. A clog dance.

LONG-ISLAND SAILOR.

Well, well, ye sulkies, there's plenty more of us. Hoe corn[9] when you may, say I. All legs go to harvest soon. Ah! here comes the music; now for it!

AZORE SAILOR.

(Ascending, and pitching the tambourine up the scuttle.)
Here you are, Pip; and there's the windlass-bitts; up you mount! Now, boys!

(*The half of them dance to the tambourine; some go below; some sleep or lie among the coils of ringing. Oaths a-plenty.*)

AZORE SAILOR.

(Dancing.)
Go it, Pip! Bang it, bell-boy! Rig it, dig it, stig it, quig it, bell-boy! Make fire-flies; break the jinglers!

PIP.

Jinglers, you say?—there goes another, dropped off; I pound it so.

CHINA SAILOR.

Rattle thy teeth, then, and pound away; make a pagoda of thyself.[1]

FRENCH SAILOR.

Merry-mad! Hold up thy hoop, Pip, till I jump through it! Split jibs![2] tear yourselves!

TASHTEGO.

(Quietly smoking.)
That's a white man; he calls that fun: humph! I save my sweat.

OLD MANX SAILOR.

I wonder whether those jolly lads bethink them of what they are dancing over. I'll dance over your grave, I will—that's the bitterest threat of your night-women, that beat head-winds round corners.[3] O Christ! to think of the green navies and the green-skulled crews! Well, well; belike the whole world's one ball, as your scholars have it; and so 'tis right to make one ball-room of it. Dance on, lads, you're young; I was once.

3RD NANTUCKET SAILOR.

Spell oh!—whew! this is worse than pulling after whales in a calm—give us a whiff, Tash.

9. A call to a hoedown, or a square dance. The Long Island sailor intends to dance whenever he can.
1. Ring like all the bells in a Chinese temple.
2. Shred yourselves like sails in a gale.
3. Proverbial threat, here attributed to witches, who while riding the air can execute impossible right-angle turns around corners. Manxmen were thought to have special knowledge of such occult matters.

(*They cease dancing, and gather in clusters. Meantime the sky darkens—the wind rises.*)

LASCAR SAILOR.[4]

By Brahma! boys, it'll be douse sail soon. The sky-born, high-tide Ganges turned to wind! Thou showest thy black brow, Seeva![5]

MALTESE SAILOR.

(Reclining and shaking his cap.)

It's the waves'—the snow-caps' turn to jig it now. They'll shake their tassels soon. Now would all the waves were women, then I'd go drown, and chassee with them evermore! There's naught so sweet on earth—heaven may not match it!—as those swift glances of warm, wild bosoms in the dance, when the over-arboring arms hide such ripe, bursting grapes.

SICILIAN SAILOR.

(Reclining.)

Tell me not of it! Hark ye, lad—fleet interlacings of the limbs—lithe swayings—coyings—flutterings! lip! heart! hip! all graze: unceasing touch and go! not taste, observe ye, else come satiety. Eh, Pagan? (*Nudging.*)

TAHITAN SAILOR.

(Reclining on a mat.)

Hail, holy nakedness of our dancing girls!—the Heeva-Heeva![6] Ah! low-valed, high-palmed Tahiti! I still rest me on thy mat, but the soft soil has slid! I saw thee woven in the wood, my mat! green the first day I brought ye thence; now worn and wilted quite. Ah me!—not thou nor I can bear the change! How then, if so be transplanted to yon sky? Hear I the roaring streams from Pirohitee's peak of spears,[7] when they leap down the crags and drown the villages?—The blast! the blast! Up, spine, and meet it! (*Leaps to his feet.*)

PORTUGUESE SAILOR.

How the sea rolls swashing 'gainst the side! Stand by for reefing, hearties! the winds are just crossing swords, pell-mell they'll go lunging presently.

DANISH SAILOR.

Crack, crack, old ship! so long as thou crackest, thou holdest! Well done! The mate there holds ye to it stiffly. He's no more afraid than the isle fort at Cattegat[8] put there to fight the Baltic with storm-lashed guns, on which the sea-salt cakes!

4. From India.
5. He swears by Brahma, the creator god of the Hindu religion, that they must soon take in ("douse") sail in the approaching high wind, which he sees as the Ganges River recycled. To him, the dark sky manifests the frown ("black brow") of Seeva (or Siva), the god of destruction.
6. A ceremonial peace dance, which seemed lascivious to Western observers such as Melville, who described it in a chapter censored from *Typee* before publication in 1846 but preserved and recycled it in Ch. 63 of *Omoo* (1847).
7. In *Omoo*, Melville described the Tahitian woven mats and the four-peaked mountain, which he spells Pirohitee. Other spellings include Pito Iti or Pito Hiti.
8. In the strait between Denmark and Sweden.

4TH NANTUCKET SAILOR.

He has his orders, mind ye that. I heard old Ahab tell him he must always kill a squall, something as they burst a water-spout with a pistol—fire your ship right into it!

ENGLISH SAILOR.

Blood! but that old man's a grand old cove! We are the lads to hunt him up his whale!

ALL.

Aye! aye!

OLD MANX SAILOR.

How the three pines shake! Pines are the hardest sort of tree to live when shifted to any other soil, and here there's none but the crew's cursed clay. Steady, helmsman! steady. This is the sort of weather when brave hearts snap ashore, and keeled hulls split at sea. Our captain has his birthmark; look yonder, boys, there's another in the sky—lurid-like, ye see, all else pitch black.

DAGGOO.

What of that? Who's afraid of black's afraid of me! I'm quarried out of it!

SPANISH SAILOR.

(*Aside.*) He wants to bully, ah!—the old grudge makes me touchy. (*Advancing.*) Aye, harpooner, thy race is the undeniable dark side of mankind—devilish dark at that. No offence.

DAGGOO (*grimly*).

None.

ST. JAGO'S SAILOR.[9]

That Spaniard's mad or drunk. But that can't be, or else in his one case our old Mogul's fire-waters are somewhat long in working.

5TH NANTUCKET SAILOR.

What's that I saw—lightning? Yes.

SPANISH SAILOR.

No; Daggoo showing his teeth.

9. From San (or São) Tiago, largest of the Cape Verde Islands in the Atlantic, owned by Portugal.

DAGGOO (*springing*).

Swallow thine, mannikin! White skin, white liver![1]

SPANISH SAILOR (*meeting him*).

Knife thee heartily! big frame, small spirit!

ALL.

A row! a row! a row!

TASHTEGO (*with a whiff*).

A row a'low, and a row aloft—Gods and men—both brawlers! Humph!

BELFAST SAILOR.

A row! arrah a row! The Virgin be blessed, a row! Plunge in with ye!

ENGLISH SAILOR.

Fair play! Snatch the Spaniard's knife! A ring, a ring!

OLD MANX SAILOR.

Ready formed. There! the ringed horizon. In that ring Cain struck Abel. Sweet work, right work! No? Why then, God, mad'st thou the ring?[2]

MATE'S VOICE FROM THE QUARTER DECK.

Hands by the halyards! in top-gallant sails! Stand by to reef topsails!

ALL.

The squall! the squall! jump, my jollies! (*They scatter.*)

PIP (*shrinking under the windlass*).

Jollies? Lord help such jollies! Crish, crash! there goes the jib-stay! Blang-whang! God! Duck lower, Pip, here comes the royal yard! It's worse than being in the whirled woods, the last day of the year! Who'd go climbing after chestnuts now? But there they go, all cursing, and here I don't. Fine prospects to 'em; they're on the road to heaven. Hold on hard! Jimmini, what a squall! But those chaps there are worse yet—they are your white squalls,[3] they. White squalls? white whale, shirr! shirr! Here have I heard all their chat just now, and the white whale—shirr! shirr!—but spoken of once! and only this evening—it makes me jingle all over like my tambourine—that anaconda of an old man swore 'em in to hunt him! Oh, thou big white God aloft there somewhere in yon darkness, have mercy

1. Cowardice. "Mannikin": toy-size man.
2. The Manxman sees the circular horizon as a combat ring made by God, like the field in which Cain killed his brother, Abel (Genesis 4.8). He questions whether that first murder was "right work," and if not, why God made the ring, the battlefield for man to fight in.
3. Sudden, violent winds bringing rain, and oddly accompanied by a white cloud in a dark sky.

on this small black boy down here; preserve him from all men that have no bowels to feel fear!

* * * * * *

CHAPTER 41[1]

MOBY DICK

I, Ishmael, was one of that crew; my shouts had gone up with the rest; my oath had been welded with theirs; and stronger I shouted, and more did I hammer and clinch my oath, because of the dread in my soul. A wild, mystical, sympathetical feeling was in me; Ahab's quenchless feud seemed mine. With greedy ears I learned the history of that murderous monster against whom I and all the others had taken our oaths of violence and revenge.

For some time past, though at intervals only, the unaccompanied, secluded White Whale had haunted those uncivilized seas mostly frequented by the Sperm Whale fishermen.[2] But not all of them knew of his existence; only a few of them, comparatively, had knowingly seen him; while the number who as yet had actually and knowingly given battle to him, was small indeed. For, owing to the large number of whale-cruisers; the disorderly way they were sprinkled over the entire watery circumference, many of them adventurously pushing their quest along solitary latitudes, so as seldom or never for a whole twelvemonth or more on a stretch, to encounter a single news-telling sail of any sort; the inordinate length of each separate voyage; the irregularity of the times of sailing from home; all these, with other circumstances, direct and indirect, long obstructed the spread through the whole world-wide whaling-fleet of the special individualizing tidings concerning Moby Dick. It was hardly to be doubted, that several vessels reported to have encountered, at such or such a time, or on such or such a meridian, a Sperm Whale of uncommon magnitude and malignity, which whale, after doing great mischief to his assailants, had completely escaped them; to some minds it was not an unfair presumption, I say, that the whale in question must have been no other than Moby Dick. Yet as of late the Sperm Whale fishery had been marked by various and not unfrequent instances of great ferocity, cunning, and malice in the monster attacked; therefore it was, that those who by accident ignorantly gave battle to Moby Dick; such hunters, perhaps, for the most part, were content to ascribe the peculiar terror he bred, more, as it were, to the perils of the Sperm Whale fishery at large, than to the individual cause. In that way, mostly, the disastrous encounter between Ahab and the whale had hitherto been popularly regarded.

And as for those who, previously hearing of the White Whale, by chance caught sight of him; in the beginning of the thing they had every one of them, almost, as boldly and fearlessly lowered for him, as for any other

1. The asterisks above are Melville's (as are similar breaks later in the novel).
2. Nineteenth-century whalers hunted three of the eleven species of great whales. The bowhead whale (which Melville calls the Greenland whale) was found in the Arctic region of the Northern Hemisphere. The right whale, now nearly extinct, once inhabited every ocean. Female sperm whales, much smaller and less valuable than the males, are normally found near the equator, but the very large male sperm whales roam all the oceans alone and at will.

whale of that species. But at length, such calamities did ensue in these assaults—not restricted to sprained wrists and ankles, broken limbs, or devouring amputations—but fatal to the last degree of fatality; those repeated disastrous repulses, all accumulating and piling their terrors upon Moby Dick; those things had gone far to shake the fortitude of many brave hunters, to whom the story of the White Whale had eventually come.

Nor did wild rumors of all sorts fail to exaggerate, and still the more horrify the true histories of these deadly encounters. For not only do fabulous rumors naturally grow out of the very body of all surprising terrible events,—as the smitten tree gives birth to its fungi; but, in maritime life, far more than in that of terra firma, wild rumors abound, wherever there is any adequate reality for them to cling to. And as the sea surpasses the land in this matter, so the whale fishery surpasses every other sort of maritime life, in the wounderfulness and fearfulness of the rumors which sometimes circulate there. For not only are whalemen as a body unexempt from that ignorance and superstitiousness hereditary to all sailors; but of all sailors, they are by all odds the most directly brought into contact with whatever is appallingly astonishing in the sea; face to face they not only eye its greatest marvels, but, hand to jaw, give battle to them. Alone, in such remotest waters, that though you sailed a thousand miles, and passed a thousand shores, you would not come to any chiseled hearthstone, or aught hospitable beneath that part of the sun; in such latitudes and longitudes, pursuing too such a calling as he does, the whaleman is wrapped by influences all tending to make his fancy pregnant with many a mighty birth.

No wonder, then, that ever gathering volume from the mere transit over the widest watery spaces, the outblown rumors of the White Whale did in the end incorporate with themselves all manner of morbid hints, and half-formed fœtal suggestions of supernatural agencies, which eventually invested Moby Dick with new terrors unborrowed from anything that visibly appears. So that in many cases such a panic did he finally strike, that few who by those rumors, at least, had heard of the White Whale, few of those hunters were willing to encounter the perils of his jaw.

But there were still other and more vital practical influences at work. Not even at the present day has the original prestige of the Sperm Whale, as fearfully distinguished from all other species of the leviathan, died out of the minds of the whalemen as a body. There are those this day among them, who, though intelligent and courageous enough in offering battle to the Greenland or Right whale, would perhaps—either from professional inexperience, or incompetency, or timidity, decline a contest with the Sperm Whale; at any rate, there are plenty of whalemen, especially among those whaling nations not sailing under the American flag, who have never hostilely encountered the Sperm Whale, but whose sole knowledge of the leviathan is restricted to the ignoble monster primitively pursued in the North; seated on their hatches, these men will hearken with a childish fire-side interest and awe, to the wild, strange tales of Southern whaling. Nor is the pre-eminent tremendousness of the great Sperm Whale anywhere more feelingly comprehended, than on board of those prows which stem him.

And as if the now tested reality of his might had in former legendary times thrown its shadow before it; we find some book naturalists—Olassen

and Povelson[3]—declaring the Sperm Whale not only to be a consternation to every other creature in the sea, but also to be so incredibly ferocious as continually to be athirst for human blood. Nor even down to so late a time as Cuvier's, were these or almost similar impressions effaced. For in his Natural History,[4] the Baron himself affirms that at sight of the Sperm Whale, all fish (sharks included) are "struck with the most lively terror," and "often in the precipitancy of their flight dash themselves against the rocks with such violence as to cause instantaneous death." And however the general experiences in the fishery may amend such reports as these; yet in their full terribleness, even to the bloodthirsty item of Povelson, the superstitious belief in them is, in some vicissitudes of their vocation, revived in the minds of the hunters.

So that overawed by the rumors and portents concerning him, not a few of the fishermen recalled, in reference to Moby Dick, the earlier days of the Sperm Whale fishery, when it was oftentimes hard to induce long practised Right whalemen to embark in the perils of this new and daring warfare; such men protesting that although other leviathans might be hopefully pursued, yet to chase and point lance at such an apparition as the Sperm Whale was not for mortal man. That to attempt it, would be inevitably to be torn into a quick eternity. On this head, there are some remarkable documents that may be consulted.

Nevertheless, some there were, who even in the face of these things were ready to give chase to Moby Dick; and a still greater number who, chancing only to hear of him distantly and vaguely, without the specific details of any certain calamity, and without superstitious accompaniments, were sufficiently hardy not to flee from the battle if offered.

One of the wild suggestings referred to, as at last coming to be linked with the White Whale in the minds of the superstitiously inclined, was the unearthly conceit that Moby Dick was ubiquitous; that he had actually been encountered in opposite latitudes at one and the same instant of time.

Nor, credulous as such minds must have been, was this conceit altogether without some faint show of superstitious probability. For as the secrets of the currents in the seas have never yet been divulged, even to the most erudite research; so the hidden ways of the Sperm Whale when beneath the surface remain, in great part, unaccountable to his pursuers; and from time to time have originated the most curious and contradictory speculations regarding them, especially concerning the mystic modes whereby, after sounding to a great depth, he transports himself with such vast swiftness to the most widely distant points.

It is a thing well known to both American and English whaleships, and also a thing placed upon authoritative record years ago by Scoresby, that some whales have been captured far north in the Pacific, in whose bodies have been found the barbs of harpoons darted in the Greenland seas.[5] Nor is it to be gainsaid, that in some of these instances it has been declared

3. What Melville knew of Olassen and Povelson, the authors of *Travels in Iceland* (1805), he picked up mainly from his frequent source, Thomas Beale's *Natural History of the Sperm Whale* (1839). He followed Beale's spelling "Olassen" rather than the more common "Olafsen," but may have miscopied Beale's "Povelsen" as "Povelson," the spelling he had seen in the *Penny Magazine*.
4. Melville's information from Frederick Cuvier's *Natural History of Whales* (below) also came from Beale's book.
5. Accounts of transpolar passages of whales are in William Scoresby Jr.'s *An Account of the Arctic Regions* (1820), pp. 1:8–12.

that the interval of time between the two assaults could not have exceeded very many days. Hence, by inference, it has been believed by some whalemen, that the Nor' West Passage,[6] so long a problem to man, was never a problem to the whale. So that here, in the real living experience of living men, the prodigies related in old times of the inland Strella mountain[7] in Portugal (near whose top there was said to be a lake in which the wrecks of ships floated up to the surface); and that still more wonderful story of the Arethusa fountain near Syracuse (whose waters were believed to have come from the Holy Land by an underground passage); these fabulous narrations are almost fully equaled by the realities of the whaleman.[8]

Forced into familiarity, then, with such prodigies as these; and knowing that after repeated, intrepid assaults, the White Whale had escaped alive; it cannot be much matter of surprise that some whalemen should go still further in their superstitions; declaring Moby Dick not only ubiquitous, but immortal (for immortality is but ubiquity in time); that though groves of spears should be planted in his flanks, he would still swim away unharmed; or if indeed he should ever be made to spout thick blood,[9] such a sight would be but a ghastly deception; for again in unensanguined billows hundreds of leagues away, his unsullied jet would once more be seen.

But even stripped of these supernatural surmisings, there was enough in the earthly make and incontestable character of the monster to strike the imagination with unwonted power. For, it was not so much his uncommon bulk that so much distinguished him from other sperm whales, but, as was elsewhere thrown out—a peculiar snow-white wrinkled forehead, and a high, pyramidical white hump. These were his prominent features; the tokens whereby, even in the limitless, uncharted seas, he revealed his identity, at a long distance, to those who knew him.

The rest of his body was so streaked, and spotted, and marbled with the same shrouded hue, that, in the end, he had gained his distinctive appellation of the White Whale; a name, indeed, literally justified by his vivid aspect, when seen gliding at high noon through a dark blue sea, leaving a milky-way wake of creamy foam, all spangled with golden gleamings.

Nor was it his unwonted magnitude, nor his remarkable hue, nor yet his deformed lower jaw, that so much invested the whale with natural terror, as that unexampled, intelligent malignity which, according to specific accounts, he had over and over again evinced in his assaults. More than all, his treacherous retreats struck more of dismay than perhaps aught else. For, when swimming before his exulting pursuers, with every apparent symptom of alarm, he had several times been known to turn round suddenly, and, bearing down upon them, either stave their boats to splinters, or drive them back in consternation to their ship.

Already several fatalities had attended his chase. But though similar disasters, however little bruited ashore, were by no means unusual in the

6. Then the only hoped for navigable connection between the Atlantic and Pacific oceans in the Arctic.
7. Serra da Estrella.
8. In *Isabel; or, Sicily* (1839) Melville's friend Henry T. Tuckerman told how Diana saved her nymph Arethusa, who was fleeing the god of the Alpheus River in Greece, by changing her into a fountain that ran under the Mediterranean Sea and emerged near Syracuse, in Sicily. Alpheus, pursuing her, rose nearby. A saying held that whatever is thrown into the Alpheus at Elis, in Greece, rises in the Arethusa at Syracuse. Melville may have read a Christianized version of the story where the waters come from the Holy Land.
9. When mortally wounded (as at the end of Ch. 62).

fishery; yet, in most instances, such seemed the White Whale's infernal aforethought of ferocity, that every dismembering or death that he caused, was not wholly regarded as having been inflicted by an unintelligent agent.

Judge, then, to what pitches of inflamed, distracted fury the minds of his more desperate hunters were impelled, when amid the chips of chewed boats, and the sinking limbs of torn comrades, they swam out of the white curds of the whale's direful wrath into the serene, exasperating sunlight, that smiled on, as if at a birth or a bridal.

His three boats stove around him, and oars and men both whirling in the eddies; one captain, seizing the line-knife from his broken prow, had dashed at the whale, as an Arkansas duellist at his foe, blindly seeking with a six inch blade[1] to reach the fathom-deep life of the whale. That captain was Ahab. And then it was, that suddenly sweeping his sickle-shaped lower jaw beneath him, Moby Dick had reaped away Ahab's leg, as a mower a blade of grass in the field. No turbaned Turk, no hired Venetian or Malay, could have smote him with more seeming malice.[2] Small reason was there to doubt, then, that ever since that almost fatal encounter, Ahab had cherished a wild vindictiveness against the whale, all the more fell for that in his frantic morbidness he at last came to identify with him, not only all his bodily woes, but all his intellectual and spiritual exasperations. The White Whale swam before him as the monomaniac incarnation of all those malicious agencies which some deep men feel eating in them, till they are left living on with half a heart and half a lung. That intangible malignity which has been from the beginning; to whose dominion even the modern Christians ascribe one-half of the worlds; which the ancient Ophites[3] of the east reverenced in their statue devil;—Ahab did not fall down and worship it like them; but deliriously transferring its idea to the abhorred white whale, he pitted himself, all mutilated, against it. All that most maddens and torments; all that stirs up the lees of things; all truth with malice in it; all that cracks the sinews and cakes the brain; all the subtle demonisms of life and thought; all evil, to crazy Ahab, were visibly personified, and made practically assailable in Moby Dick. He piled upon the whale's white hump the sum of all the general rage and hate felt by his whole race from Adam down; and then, as if his chest had been a mortar, he burst his hot heart's shell upon it.

It is not probable that this monomania in him took its instant rise at the precise time of his bodily dismemberment. Then, in darting at the monster, knife in hand, he had but given loose to a sudden, passionate, corporal animosity; and when he received the stroke that tore him, he probably but felt the agonizing bodily laceration, but nothing more. Yet, when by this collision forced to turn towards home, and for long months of days and weeks, Ahab and anguish lay stretched together in one hammock, rounding in mid winter that dreary, howling Patagonian Cape; then it was, that his torn body and gashed soul bled into one another; and so

1. "Arkansas duel with bowie knives" (instead of guns) was a journalistic commonplace. Jokers called a Bowie knife an Arkansas toothpick. Laws sometimes regulated the carrying or drawing of "any Bowie knife, Arkansas tooth-pick, or any knife or weapon that shall . . . resemble a Bowie knife or Arkansas tooth-pick" (Nashville *Tennessean*, March 14, 1838). (*Bowie* rhymes with *gooey*.)
2. An echo of *Othello* 5.2.351–55: "in Aleppo once / Where a malignant and a turban'd Turk / Beat a Venetian and traduced the state, / I took by the throat the circumcised dog / and smote him, thus."
3. A serpent-worshiping Christian sect of the 2nd century C. E.

interfusing, made him mad. That it was only then, on the homeward voyage, after the encounter, that the final monomania seized him, seems all but certain from the fact that, at intervals during the passage, he was a raving lunatic; and, though unlimbed of a leg, yet such vital strength yet lurked in his Egyptian chest, and was moreover intensified by his delirium, that his mates were forced to lace him fast, even there, as he sailed, raving in his hammock. In a strait-jacket, he swung to the mad rockings of the gales. And, when running into more sufferable latitudes, the ship, with mild stun'sails spread, floated across the tranquil tropics, and, to all appearances, the old man's delirium seemed left behind him with the Cape Horn swells, and he came forth from his dark den into the blessed light and air; even then, when he bore that firm, collected front, however pale, and issued his calm orders once again; and his mates thanked God the direful madness was now gone; even then, Ahab, in his hidden self, raved on. Human madness is oftentimes a cunning and most feline thing. When you think it fled, it may have but become transfigured into some still subtler form. Ahab's full lunacy subsided not, but deepeningly contracted; like the unabated Hudson, when that noble Northman flows narrowly, but unfathomably through the Highland gorge.[4] But, as in his narrow-flowing monomania, not one jot of Ahab's broad madness had been left behind; so in that broad madness, not one jot of his great natural intellect had perished. That before living agent, now became the living instrument. If such a furious trope[5] may stand, his special lunacy stormed his general sanity, and carried it, and turned all its concentred cannon upon its own mad mark; so that far from having lost his strength, Ahab, to that one end, did now possess a thousand fold more potency than ever he had sanely brought to bear upon any one reasonable object.

This is much; yet Ahab's larger, darker, deeper part remains unhinted. But vain to popularize profundities, and all truth is profound. Winding far down from within the very heart of this spiked Hotel de Cluny[6] where we here stand—however grand and wonderful, now quit it;—and take your way, ye nobler, sadder souls, to those vast Roman halls of Thermes;[7] where far beneath the fantastic towers of man's upper earth, his root of grandeur, his whole awful essence sits in bearded state; an antique buried beneath antiquities, and throned on torsoes! So with a broken throne, the great gods mock that captive king; so like a Caryatid,[8] he patient sits, upholding on his frozen brow the piled entablatures of ages. Wind ye down there, ye prouder, sadder souls! question that proud, sad king! A family likeness! aye, he did beget ye, ye young exiled royalties; and from your grim sire only will the old State-secret come.

Now, in his heart, Ahab had some glimpse of this, namely: all my means are sane, my motive and my object mad. Yet without power to kill, or

4. The Hudson River at its narrowest point, flowing through the Catskill Mountains just above the wide Tappan Zee estuary. The Hudson is compared to a Viking hero ("noble Northman"). From the time he was in his mother's womb Melville had gone up and down the Hudson in steamboats many times.
5. Extreme figure of speech.
6. Medieval building in the Paris Latin Quarter, built above 2,000-year-old Roman ruins.
7. Baths (Latin). When he examined the excavations below the modern rooms in 1849 Melville apparently mistook the word Thermes in his guidebook to be a proper name. Powerfully moved, Melville described the building as just the place where he would like to live.
8. Female sculpture used as a structural column. Melville more correctly would have used *atlas* or *telamon* to mean a male figure so used.

change, or shun the fact; he likewise knew that to mankind he did long dissemble; in some sort, did still. But that thing of his dissembling was only subject to his perceptibility, not to his will determinate. Nevertheless, so well did he succeed in that dissembling, that when with ivory leg he stepped ashore at last, no Nantucketer thought him otherwise than but naturally grieved, and that to the quick, with the terrible casualty which had overtaken him.

The report of his undeniable delirium at sea was likewise popularly ascribed to a kindred cause. And so too, all the added moodiness which always afterwards, to the very day of sailing in the Pequod on the present voyage, sat brooding on his brow. Nor is it so very unlikely, that far from distrusting his fitness for another whaling voyage, on account of such dark symptoms, the calculating people of that prudent isle were inclined to harbor the conceit, that for those very reasons he was all the better qualified and set on edge, for a pursuit so full of rage and wildness as the bloody hunt of whales. Gnawed within and scorched without, with the infixed, unrelenting fangs of some incurable idea; such an one, could he be found, would seem the very man to dart his iron and lift his lance against the most appalling of all brutes. Or, if for any reason thought to be corporeally incapacitated for that, yet such an one would seem superlatively competent to cheer and howl on his underlings to the attack. But be all this as it may, certain it is, that with the mad secret of his unabated rage bolted up and keyed in him, Ahab had purposely sailed upon the present voyage with the one only and all-engrossing object of hunting the White Whale. Had any of his old acquaintances on shore but half dreamed of what was lurking in him then, how soon would their aghast and righteous souls have wrenched the ship from such a fiendish man! They were bent on profitable cruises, the profit to be counted down in dollars from the mint. He was intent on an audacious, immitigable, and supernatural revenge.

Here, then, was this grey-headed, ungodly old man, chasing with curses a Job's whale[9] round the world, at the head of a crew, too, chiefly made up of mongrel renegades, and castaways, and cannibals—morally enfeebled also, by the incompetence of mere unaided virtue or right-mindedness in Starbuck, the invulnerable jollity of indifference and recklessness in Stubb, and the pervading mediocrity in Flask. Such a crew, so officered, seemed specially picked and packed by some infernal fatality to help him to his monomaniac revenge. How it was that they so aboundingly responded to the old man's ire—by what evil magic their souls were possessed, that at times his hate seemed almost theirs; the White Whale as much their insufferable foe as his; how all this came to be—what the White Whale was to them, or how to their unconscious understandings, also, in some dim, unsuspected way, he might have seemed the gliding great demon of the seas of life,—all this to explain, would be to dive deeper than Ishmael can go. The subterranean miner that works in us all, how can one tell whither leads his shaft by the ever shifting, muffled sound of his pick? Who does not feel the irresistible arm drag? What skiff in tow of a seventy-four[1] can stand still? For one, I gave myself up to the abandonment of the time and

9. See Job 41.1: "Canst thou draw out leviathan with an hook? or his tongue with a cord which thou lettest down?"
1. A battleship mounting seventy-four guns.

the place; but while yet all arush to encounter the whale, could see naught in that brute but the deadliest ill.

CHAPTER 42

THE WHITENESS OF THE WHALE[1]

What the white whale was to Ahab, has been hinted; what, at times, he was to me, as yet remains unsaid.

Aside from those more obvious considerations touching Moby Dick, which could not but occasionally awaken in any man's soul some alarm, there was another thought, or rather vague, nameless horror concerning him, which at times by its intensity completely overpowered all the rest; and yet so mystical and well nigh ineffable was it, that I almost despair of putting it in a comprehensible form. It was the whiteness of the whale that above all things appalled me. But how can I hope to explain myself here; and yet, in some dim, random way, explain myself I must, else all these chapters might be naught.

Though in many natural objects, whiteness refiningly enhances beauty, as if imparting some special virtue of its own, as in marbles, japonicas,[2] and pearls; and though various nations have in some way recognised a certain royal pre-eminence in this hue; even the barbaric, grand old kings of Pegu[3] placing the title "Lord of the White Elephants" above all their other magniloquent ascriptions of dominion; and the modern kings of Siam unfurling the same snow-white quadruped in the royal standard; and the Hanoverian[4] flag bearing the one figure of a snow-white charger; and the great Austrian Empire, Cæsarian heir to overlording Rome,[5] having for the imperial color the same imperial hue; and though this preeminence in it applies to the human race itself, giving the white man ideal mastership over every dusky tribe;[6] and though, besides all this, whiteness has been even made significant of gladness, for among the Romans a white stone marked a joyful day; and though in other mortal sympathies and symbolizings, this same hue is made the emblem of many touching, noble things—the innocence of brides, the benignity of age; though among the Red Men of America the giving of the white belt of wampum[7] was the deepest pledge of honor; though in many climes, whiteness typifies the majesty of Justice in the ermine of the Judge, and contributes to the daily state of kings and queens drawn by milk-white steeds; though even in the higher mysteries of the most august religions it has been made the symbol of the divine spotlessness and power; by the Persian fire worshippers,[8]

1. Melville may have taken hints from treatments of color in writers listed by Mansfield and Vincent (704 ff.), including Rabelais, Sir Thomas Browne, Sir Walter Scott, and Goethe.
2. Melville seems to refer to flowers grown from Japanese camellia plants, some of which were of an unusually pure whiteness.
3. Lower Burma.
4. The German state of Hanover.
5. The Holy Roman Empire, claiming succession from the Roman caesars.
6. A conventional racial formula, at odds with attitudes toward race exemplified elsewhere in the book.
7. Mansfield and Vincent (pp. 707–08) cite the New York *Literary World* (December 28, 1850) as the probable source for this and the reference to the Iroquois sacred White Dog later in the paragraph. See Melville's essay on Hawthorne's *Mosses from an Old Manse* and the note to "sacred white doe" (p. 550, n. 9).
8. Zoroastrians, commonly understood to worship fire.

the white forked flame being held the holiest on the altar; and in the Greek mythologies, Great Jove himself being made incarnate in a snow-white bull;[9] and though to the noble Iroquois, the mid-winter sacrifice of the sacred White Dog was by far the holiest festival of their theology, that spotless, faithful creature being held the purest envoy they could send to the Great Spirit with the annual tidings of their own fidelity; and though directly from the Latin word for white, all Christian priests derive the name of one part of their sacred vesture, the alb or tunic, worn beneath the cassock;[1] and though among the holy pomps of the Romish faith, white is specially employed in the celebration of the Passion of our Lord; though in the Vision of St. John,[2] white robes are given to the redeemed, and the four-and-twenty elders stand clothed in white before the great white throne, and the Holy One that sitteth there white like wool; yet for all these accumulated associations, with whatever is sweet, and honorable, and sublime, there yet lurks an elusive something in the innermost idea of this hue, which strikes more of panic to the soul than that redness which affrights in blood.

This elusive quality it is, which causes the thought of whiteness, when divorced from more kindly associations, and coupled with any object terrible in itself, to heighten that terror to the furthest bounds. Witness the white bear of the poles, and the white shark of the tropics; what but their smooth, flaky whiteness makes them the transcendent horrors they are? That ghastly whiteness it is which imparts such an abhorrent mildness, even more loathsome than terrific, to the dumb gloating of their aspect. So that not the fierce-fanged tiger in his heraldic coat can so stagger courage as the white-shrouded bear or shark.[3]

Bethink thee of the albatross: whence come those clouds of spiritual wonderment and pale dread, in which that white phantom sails in all imaginations? Not Coleridge[4] first threw that spell; but God's great, unflattering laureate, Nature.[5]

9. The shape in which the king of the Roman gods carried away Princess Europa.
1. Not a strictly accurate account of the use of white in Catholic ceremonies.
2. See Revelation 7.9: "After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands."
3. With reference to the Polar bear, it may possibly be urged by him who would fain go still deeper into this matter, that it is not the whiteness, separately regarded, which heightens the intolerable hideousness of that brute; for, analysed, that heightened hideousness, it might be said, only arises from the circumstance, that the irresponsible ferociousness of the creature stands invested in the fleece of celestial innocence and love; and hence, by bringing together two such opposite emotions in our minds, the Polar bear frightens us with so unnatural a contrast. But even assuming all this to be true; yet, were it not for the whiteness, you would not have that intensified terror.

   As for the white shark, the white gliding ghostliness of repose in that creature, when beheld in his ordinary moods, strangely tallies with the same quality in the Polar quadruped. This peculiarity is most vividly hit by the French in the name they bestow upon that fish. The Romish mass for the dead begins with "Requiem eternam" (eternal rest), whence *Requiem* denominating the mass itself, and any other funereal music. Now, in allusion to the white, silent stillness of death in this shark, and the mild deadliness of his habits, the French call him *Requin*. [Melville's note.]
4. The albatross plays an eerie role in Samuel Taylor Coleridge's 1798 ballad "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner." See the "wild Rhyme" cited by Melville in the following note.
5. I remember the first albatross I ever saw. It was during a prolonged gale, in waters hard upon the Antarctic seas. From my forenoon watch below, I ascended to the overclouded deck; and there, dashed upon the main hatches, I saw a regal, feathery thing of unspotted whiteness, and with a hooked, Roman bill sublime. At intervals, it arched forth its vast archangel wings, as if to embrace some holy ark. Wondrous flutterings and throbbings shook it. Though bodily unharmed, it uttered cries, as some king's ghost in supernatural distress. Through its inexpressible, strange eyes, methought I peeped to secrets which took hold of God. As Abraham before the angels, I bowed myself; the thing was so white, its wings so wide, and in those for ever exiled waters, I had lost the miserable warping memories of traditions and of towns. Long I gazed at that prodigy of plumage. I cannot tell, can only hint, the things that darted through me then. But at last I awoke;

Most famous in our Western annals and Indian traditions is that of the White Steed of the Praries;[6] a magnificent milk-white charger, large-eyed, small-headed, bluff-chested, and with the dignity of a thousand monarchs in his lofty, overscorning carriage. He was the elected Xerxes[7] of vast herds of wild horses, whose pastures in those days were only fenced by the Rocky Mountains and the Alleghanies. At their flaming head he westward trooped it like that chosen star[8] which every evening leads on the hosts of light. The flashing cascade of his mane, the curving comet of his tail, invested him with housings more resplendent than gold and silver-beaters could have furnished him. A most imperial and archangelical apparition of that unfallen, western world,[9] which to the eyes of the old trappers and hunters revived the glories of those primeval times when Adam walked majestic as a god, bluff-bowed[1] and fearless as this mighty steed. Whether marching amid his aides and marshals in the van of countless cohorts that endlessly streamed it over the plains, like an Ohio;[2] or whether with his circumambient subjects browsing all around at the horizon, the White Steed gallopingly reviewed them with warm nostrils reddening through his cool milkiness; in whatever aspect he presented himself, always to the bravest Indians he was the object of trembling reverence and awe. Nor can it be questioned from what stands on legendary record of this noble horse, that it was his spiritual whiteness chiefly, which so clothed him with divineness; and that this divineness had that in it which, though commanding worship, at the same time enforced a certain nameless terror.

But there are other instances where this whiteness loses all that accessory and strange glory which invests it in the White Steed and Albatross.

What is it that in the Albino man so peculiarly repels and often shocks the eye, as that sometimes he is loathed by his own kith and kin! It is that whiteness which invests him, a thing expressed by the name he bears. The Albino is as well made as other men—has no substantive deformity—and yet this mere aspect of all-pervading whiteness makes him more strangely hideous than the ugliest abortion. Why should this be so?

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and turning, asked a sailor what bird was this. A goney, he replied. Goney! I never had heard that name before; is it conceivable that this glorious thing is utterly unknown to men ashore! never! But some time after, I learned that goney was some seaman's name for albatross. So that by no possibility could Coleridge's wild Rhyme have had aught to do with those mystical impressions which were mine, when I saw that bird upon our deck. For neither had I then read the Rhyme, nor knew the bird to be an albatross. Yet in saying this, I do but indirectly burnish a little brighter the noble merit of the poem and the poet.

I assert, then, that in the wondrous bodily whiteness of the bird chiefly lurks the secret of the spell; a truth the more evinced in this, that by a solecism of terms there are birds called grey albatrosses; and these I have frequently seen, but never with such emotions as when I beheld the Antarctic fowl.

But how had the mystic thing been caught? Whisper it not, and I will tell; with a treacherous hook and line, as the fowl floated on the sea. At last the Captain made a postman of it; tying a lettered, leathern tally round its neck, with the ship's time and place; and then letting it escape. But I doubt not, that leathern tally, meant for man, was taken off in Heaven, when the white fowl flew to join the wing-folding, the invoking, and adoring cherubim! [Melville's note.] Robert D. Madison found that in drawing this note from Henry T. Cheever's *The Island World of the Pacific* (1851), Melville gave a metaphysical flourish to the account of tying little "billets" (messages) of wood about the birds' necks before releasing them. See Bibliography.

6. Mansfield and Vincent (pp. 711–12) quote a possible source in James Hall's *The Wilderness and the War Path* (1846).
7. A king who led large Persian armies against the Greeks in the 5th century B.C.E.
8. The planet Venus.
9. The Eden-like condition of the North American continent before Europeans settled there.
1. With full, square chests like a whaleship's bows.
2. Like that wide river.

Nor, in quite other aspects, does Nature in her least palpable but not the less malicious agencies, fail to enlist among her force this crowning attribute of the terrible. From its snowy aspect, the gauntleted ghost of the Southern Seas has been denominated the White Squall. Nor, in some historic instances, has the art of human malice omitted so potent an auxiliary. How wildly it heightens the effect of that passage in Froissart,[3] when, masked in the snowy symbol of their faction, the desperate White Hoods of Ghent murder their bailiff in the market-place!

Nor, in some things, does the common, hereditary experience of all mankind fail to bear witness to the supernaturalism of this hue. It cannot well be doubted, that the one visible quality in the aspect of the dead which most appals the gazer, is the marble pallor lingering there; as if indeed that pallor were as much the badge of consternation in the other world, as of mortal trepidation here. And from that pallor of the dead, we borrow the expressive hue of the shroud in which we wrap them. Nor even in our superstitions do we fail to throw the same snowy mantle round our phantoms; all ghosts rising in a milk-white fog—Yea, while these terrors seize us, let us add, that even the king of terrors, when personified by the evangelist, rides on his pallid horse.[4]

Therefore, in his other moods, symbolize whatever grand or gracious thing he will by whiteness, no man can deny that in its profoundest idealized significance it calls up a peculiar apparition to the soul.

But though without dissent this point be fixed, how is mortal man to account for it? To analyse it, would seem impossible. Can we, then, by the citation of some of those instances wherein this thing of whiteness—though for the time either wholly or in great part stripped of all direct associations calculated to impart to it aught fearful, but, nevertheless, is found to exert over us the same sorcery, however modified;—can we thus hope to light upon some chance clue to conduct us to the hidden cause we seek?

Let us try. But in a matter like this, subtlety appeals to subtlety, and without imagination no man can follow another into these halls. And though, doubtless, some at least of the imaginative impressions about to be presented may have been shared by most men, yet few perhaps were entirely conscious of them at the time, and therefore may not be able to recall them now.

Why to the man of untutored ideality, who happens to be but loosely acquainted with the peculiar character of the day, does the bare mention of Whitsuntide[5] marshal in the fancy such long, dreary, speechless processions of slow-pacing pilgrims, down-cast and hooded with new-fallen snow? Or, to the unread, unsophisticated Protestant of the Middle American States,[6] why does the passing mention of a White Friar or a White Nun, evoke such an eyeless statue in the soul?

Or what is there apart from the traditions of dungeoned warriors and kings (which will not wholly account for it) that makes the White Tower[7]

3. A 1379 murder described in John Froissart's *Chronicles of England, France and Spain* (translated around 1520 by John Bourchier, later Lord Berners, 1523–25). Several recent London editions were available in Melville's time.
4. Revelation 6.8: "And I looked, and behold a pale horse: and his name that sat on him was Death, and Hell followed with him." The book of Revelation was attributed to the Apostle John, "evangelist" because he was the author of one of the evangels, or gospels.
5. The week beginning with Whitsunday (Pentecost), the seventh Sunday after Easter, when converts in white robes were baptized.
6. Mid-Atlantic states (New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware, Maryland).
7. Central one of the moated cluster of thirteen towers on the River Thames, formerly whitewashed inside and out. Melville saw the White Tower in 1849.

of London tell so much more strongly on the imagination of an untravelled American, than those other storied structures, its neighbors—the Byward Tower, or even the Bloody? And those sublimer towers, the White Mountains of New Hampshire, whence, in peculiar moods, comes that gigantic ghostliness over the soul at the bare mention of that name, while the thought of Virginia's Blue Ridge is full of a soft, dewy, distant dreaminess? Or why, irrespective of all latitudes and longitudes, does the name of the White Sea exert such a spectralness over the fancy, while that of the Yellow Sea[8] lulls us with mortal thoughts of long lacquered mild afternoons on the waves, followed by the gaudiest and yet sleepiest of sunsets? Or, to choose a wholly unsubstantial instance, purely addressed to the fancy, why, in reading the old fairy tales of Central Europe, does "the tall pale man" of the Hartz forests,[9] whose changeless pallor unrustlingly glides through the green of the groves—why is this phantom more terrible than all the whooping imps of the Blocksburg?

Nor is it, altogether, the remembrance of her cathedral-toppling earthquakes; nor the stampedoes of her frantic seas; nor the tearlessness of arid skies that never rain; nor the sight of her wide field of leaning spires, wrenched cope-stones, and crosses all adroop (like canted yards of anchored fleets); and her suburban avenues of house-walls lying over upon each other, as a tossed pack of cards;—it is not these things alone which make tearless Lima,[1] the strangest, saddest city thou can'st see. For Lima has taken the white veil; and there is a higher horror in this whiteness of her woe. Old as Pizarro, this whiteness keeps her ruins for ever new; admits not the cheerful greenness of complete decay; spreads over her broken ramparts the rigid pallor of an apoplexy that fixes its own distortions.[2]

I know that, to the common apprehension, this phenomenon of whiteness is not confessed to be the prime agent in exaggerating the terror of objects otherwise terrible; nor to the unimaginative mind is there aught of terror in those appearances whose awfulness to another mind almost solely consists in this one phenomenon, especially when exhibited under any form at all approaching to muteness or universality. What I mean by these two statements may perhaps be respectively elucidated by the following examples.

First: The mariner, when drawing nigh the coasts of foreign lands, if by night he hear the roar of breakers, starts to vigilance, and feels just enough of trepidation to sharpen all his faculties; but under precisely similar circumstances, let him be called from his hammock to view his ship sailing through a midnight sea of milky whiteness—as if from encircling headlands shoals of combed white bears were swimming round him, then he

8. The geographical references are to the Blue Ridge Mountains of western Virginia, the White Sea on the north coast of Russia, and the Yellow Sea between China and the Korean peninsula.
9. These forests in central Germany were the haunt of such folklore figures as the "pale man," as was Brocken ("Blocksburg"); its central peak was the scene of the Walpurgis Night Witches' celebrations on May Day, as dramatized in Goethe's *Faust*.
1. Founded in 1535 by the Spanish conqueror of Peru, Francisco Pizarro (1470?–1541), Lima has an annual rainfall of less than two inches, limiting vegetation. Still visible to Melville when he visited Lima in 1844 were the effects of the earthquake that destroyed the city a century before, in 1746.
2. Other visitors to Lima recorded it as a colorful city, not as peculiarly white. Considered overly sophisticated, supersubtle, culturally decadent, theologically dangerous, and spectacularly beautiful, Lima exerted a strong power over Melville's imagination, as is shown by his having Ishmael choose it as the setting where he told "The Town-Ho's Story" (Ch. 54) between his voyage on the *Pequod* and the present.

feels a silent, superstitious dread; the shrouded phantom of the whitened waters is horrible to him as a real ghost; in vain the lead assures him he is still off soundings; heart and helm they both go down; he never rests till blue water is under him again. Yet where is the mariner who will tell thee, "Sir, it was not so much the fear of striking hidden rocks, as the fear of that hideous whiteness that so stirred me"?

Second: To the native Indian of Peru, the continual sight of the snow-howdahed Andes conveys naught of dread, except, perhaps, in the mere fancying of the eternal frosted desolateness reigning at such vast altitudes, and the natural conceit of what a fearfulness it would be to lose oneself in such inhuman solitudes. Much the same is it with the backwoodsman of the West, who with comparative indifference views an unbounded prairie sheeted with driven snow, no shadow of tree or twig to break the fixed trance of whiteness. Not so the sailor, beholding the scenery of the Antarctic seas; where at times, by some infernal trick of legerdemain in the powers of frost and air, he, shivering and half shipwrecked, instead of rainbows speaking hope and solace to his misery, views what seems a boundless church-yard grinning upon him with its lean ice monuments and splintered crosses.

But thou sayest, methinks this white-lead[3] chapter about whiteness is but a white flag hung out from a craven soul; thou surrenderest to a hypo, Ishmael.

Tell me, why this strong young colt, foaled in some peaceful valley of Vermont, far removed from all beasts of prey—why is it that upon the sunniest day, if you but shake a fresh buffalo robe behind him, so that he cannot even see it, but only smells its wild animal muskiness—why will he start, snort, and with bursting eyes paw the ground in phrensies of affright? There is no remembrance in him of any gorings of wild creatures in his green northern home, so that the strange muskiness he smells cannot recall to him anything associated with the experience of former perils; for what knows he, this New England colt, of the black bisons of distant Oregon?

No: but here thou beholdest even in a dumb brute, the instinct of the knowledge of the demonism in the world. Though thousands of miles from Oregon, still when he smells that savage musk, the rending, goring bison herds are as present as to the deserted wild foal of the prairies, which this instant they may be trampling into dust.

Thus, then, the muffled rollings of a milky sea; the bleak rustlings of the festooned frosts of mountains; the desolate shiftings of the windrowed snows of prairies; all these, to Ishmael,[4] are as the shaking of that buffalo robe to the frightened colt!

Though neither knows where lie the nameless things of which the mystic sign gives forth such hints; yet with me, as with the colt, somewhere those things must exist. Though in many of its aspects this visible world seems formed in love, the invisible spheres were formed in fright.

But not yet have we solved the incantation[5] of this whiteness, and learned why it appeals with such power to the soul; and more strange and far more portentous—why, as we have seen, it is at once the most meaning

3. Powder used in making paint.
4. Ishmael, like the colt, has an instinctive knowledge of demonism in the world; in them, certain sensory stimuli stir an intuitive sense of spiritual evil underlying nature.
5. Magical spell.

symbol of spiritual things, nay, the very veil of the Christian's Deity; and yet should be as it is, the intensifying agent in things the most appalling to mankind.

Is it that by its indefiniteness it shadows forth the heartless voids and immensities of the universe, and thus stabs us from behind with the thought of annihilation, when beholding the white depths of the milky way? Or is it, that as in essence whiteness is not so much a color as the visible absence of color, and at the same time the concrete of all colors; is it for these reasons that there is such a dumb blankness, full of meaning, in a wide landscape of snows—a colorless, all-color of atheism from which we shrink? And when we consider that other theory of the natural philosophers,[6] that all other earthly hues—every stately or lovely emblazoning—the sweet tinges of sunset skies and woods; yea, and the gilded velvets of butterflies, and the butterfly cheeks of young girls; all these are but subtile deceits, not actually inherent in substances, but only laid on from without; so that all deified Nature absolutely paints like the harlot, whose allurements cover nothing but the charnel-house within;[7] and when we proceed further, and consider that the mystical cosmetic which produces every one of her hues, the great principle of light, for ever remains white or colorless in itself, and if operating without medium upon matter, would touch all objects, even tulips and roses, with its own blank tinge—pondering all this, the palsied universe lies before us a leper; and like wilful travellers in Lapland, who refuse to wear colored and coloring glasses upon their eyes, so the wretched infidel gazes himself blind at the monumental white shroud that wraps all the prospect around him. And of all these things the Albino whale was the symbol. Wonder ye then at the fiery hunt?

CHAPTER 43

HARK!

"Hist! Did you hear that noise, Cabaco?"

It was the middle-watch:[1] a fair moonlight; the seamen were standing in a cordon,[2] extending from one of the fresh-water butts in the waist, to the scuttle-butt[3] near the taffrail. In this manner, they passed the buckets to fill the scuttle-butt. Standing, for the most part, on the hallowed precincts of the quarter-deck, they were careful not to speak or rustle their feet. From hand to hand, the buckets went in the deepest silence, only broken by the occasional flap of a sail, and the steady hum of the unceasingly advancing keel.

It was in the midst of this repose, that Archy, one of the cordon, whose post was near the after-hatches, whispered to his neighbor, a Cholo,[4] the words above.

6. Scientists such as John Locke (1632–1704), whose empirical philosophy held that such "secondary qualities" of material objects as color are mental constructs, not "primary qualities" inherent in the objects.
7. Nature's beauty, taken by pantheistic Romantics in Melville's time as the embodiment of a benevolent God, here is taken as the mere cosmetic of an inwardly dead prostitute or the paint of a godless universe—a whited sepulchre ("charnel house"). At the end of the sentence this becomes the view of the unbeliever, or atheist ("wretched infidel").
1. From midnight to 4 A.M.
2. The men are spaced three or so feet apart so they can efficiently pass a bucket from hand to hand.
3. A small barrel from which the sailors get their fresh water (hence *gossip*).
4. A Peruvian of part Indian, part Spanish parentage.

"Hist! did you hear that noise, Cabaco?"

"Take the bucket, will ye, Archy? what noise d'ye mean?"

"There it is again—under the hatches—don't you hear it—a cough—it sounded like a cough."

"Cough be damned! Pass along that return bucket."

"There again—there it is!—it sounds like two or three sleepers turning over, now!"

"Caramba! have done, shipmate, will ye? It's the three soaked biscuits ye eat for supper turning over inside of ye—nothing else. Look to the bucket!"

"Say what ye will, shipmate; I've sharp ears."

"Aye, you are the chap, ain't ye, that heard the hum of the old Quakeress's knitting-needles fifty miles at sea from Nantucket; you're the chap."

"Grin away; we'll see what turns up. Hark ye, Cabaco, there is somebody down in the after-hold that has not yet been seen on deck; and I suspect our old Mogul knows something of it too. I heard Stubb tell Flask, one morning watch, that there was something of that sort in the wind."

"Tish! the bucket!"

CHAPTER 44

THE CHART[1]

Had you followed Captain Ahab down into his cabin after the squall that took place on the night succeeding that wild ratification of his purpose with his crew, you would have seen him go to a locker in the transom, and bringing out a large wrinkled roll of yellowish sea charts, spread them before him on his screwed-down table. Then seating himself before it, you would have seen him intently study the various lines and shadings which there met his eye; and with slow but steady pencil trace additional courses over spaces that before were blank. At intervals, he would refer to piles of old log-books[2] beside him, wherein were set down the seasons and places in which, on various former voyages of various ships, sperm whales had been captured or seen.

While thus employed, the heavy pewter lamp suspended in chains over his head, continually rocked with the motion of the ship, and for ever threw shifting gleams and shadows of lines upon his wrinkled brow, till it almost seemed that while he himself was marking out lines and courses on the wrinkled charts, some invisible pencil was also tracing lines and courses upon the deeply marked chart of his forehead.

But it was not this night in particular that, in the solitude of his cabin, Ahab thus pondered over his charts. Almost every night they were brought out; almost every night some pencil marks were effaced, and others were substituted. For with the charts of all four oceans before him, Ahab was threading a maze of currents and eddies, with a view to the more certain accomplishment of that monomaniac thought of his soul.

1. Mansfield and Vincent (p. 717) show that most of this chapter derives from Wilkes's *Narrative of the United States Exploring Expedition*, vol. 5 (1844), ch. 12, "Currents and Whaling."
2. Bound ledgers in which the first mate (or another officer) kept a daily record of such nautical matters as the ship's speed, progress, and location; weather conditions; and whales sighted, pursued, and captured as well as any noteworthy events on board and encounters with other ships.

Now, to any one not fully acquainted with the ways of the leviathans, it might seem an absurdly hopeless task thus to seek out one solitary creature in the unhooped oceans of this planet. But not so did it seem to Ahab, who knew the sets of all tides and currents; and thereby calculating the driftings of the sperm whale's food; and, also, calling to mind the regular, ascertained seasons for hunting him in particular latitudes; could arrive at reasonable surmises, almost approaching to certainties, concerning the timeliest day to be upon this or that ground in search of his prey.

So assured, indeed, is the fact concerning the periodicalness of the sperm whale's resorting to given waters, that many hunters believe that, could he be closely observed and studied throughout the world; were the logs for one voyage of the entire whale fleet carefully collated, then the migrations of the sperm whale would be found to correspond in invariability to those of the herring-shoals or the flights of swallows. On this hint, attempts have been made to construct elaborate migratory charts of the sperm whale.[3]

Besides, when making a passage from one feeding-ground to another, the sperm whales, guided by some infallible instinct—say, rather, secret intelligence from the Deity—mostly swim in *veins*, as they are called; continuing their way along a given ocean-line with such undeviating exactitude, that no ship ever sailed her course, by any chart, with one tithe[4] of such marvellous precision. Though, in these cases, the direction taken by any one whale be straight as a surveyor's parallel, and though the line of advance be strictly confined to its own unavoidable, straight wake, yet the arbitrary *vein* in which at these times he is said to swim, generally embraces some few miles in width (more or less, as the vein is presumed to expand or contract); but never exceeds the visual sweep from the whale-ship's mast-heads, when circumspectly gliding along this magic zone. The sum is, that at particular seasons within that breadth and along that path, migrating whales may with great confidence be looked for.

And hence not only at substantiated times, upon well known separate feeding-grounds, could Ahab hope to encounter his prey; but in crossing the widest expanses of water between those grounds he could, by his art, so place and time himself on his way, as even then not to be wholly without prospect of a meeting.

There was a circumstance which at first sight seemed to entangle his delirious but still methodical scheme. But not so in the reality, perhaps. Though the gregarious sperm whales have their regular seasons for particular grounds, yet in general you cannot conclude that the herds which haunted such and such a latitude or longitude this year, say, will turn out to be identically the same with those that were found there the preceding season; though there are peculiar and unquestionable instances where the contrary of this has proved true. In general, the same remark, only within a less wide limit, applies to the solitaries and hermits among the matured,

3. Since the above was written, the statement is happily borne out by an official circular, issued by Lieutenant Maury, of the National Observatory, Washington, April 16th, 1851. By that circular, it appears that precisely such a chart is in course of completion; and portions of it are presented in the circular. "This chart divides the ocean into districts of five degrees of latitude by five degrees of longitude; perpendicularly through each of which districts are twelve columns for the twelve months; and horizontally through each of which districts are three lines; one to show the number of days that have been spent in each month in every district, and the two others to show the number of days on which whales, sperm or right, have been seen." [Melville's note.]
4. One tenth.

aged sperm whales. So that though Moby Dick had in a former year been seen, for example, on what is called the Seychelle ground in the Indian ocean, or Volcano Bay on the Japanese Coast; yet it did not follow, that were the Pequod to visit either of those spots at any subsequent corresponding season, she would infallibly encounter him there. So, too, with some other feeding grounds, where he had at times revealed himself. But all these seemed only his casual stopping-places and ocean-inns, so to speak, not his places of prolonged abode. And where Ahab's chances of accomplishing his object have hitherto been spoken of, allusion has only been made to whatever way-side, antecedent, extra prospects were his, ere a particular set time and place were attained, when all possibilities would become probabilities, and, as Ahab fondly thought, every probability the next thing to a certainty. That particular set time and place were conjoined in the one technical phrase—the Season-on-the-Line.[5] For there and then, for several consecutive years, Moby Dick had been periodically descried, lingering in those waters for awhile, as the sun, in its annual round, loiters for a predicted interval in any one sign of the Zodiac.[6] There it was, too, that most of the deadly encounters with the white whale had taken place; there the waves were storied with his deeds; there also was that tragic spot where the monomaniac old man had found the awful motive to his vengeance. But in the cautious comprehensiveness and unloitering vigilance with which Ahab threw his brooding soul into this unfaltering hunt, he would not permit himself to rest all his hopes upon the one crowning fact above mentioned, however flattering it might be to those hopes; nor in the sleeplessness of his vow could he so tranquillize his unquiet heart as to postpone all intervening quest.

Now, the Pequod had sailed from Nantucket at the very beginning of the Season-on-the-Line. No possible endeavor then could enable her commander to make the great passage southwards, double Cape Horn, and then running down sixty degrees of latitude arrive in the equatorial Pacific in time to cruise there. Therefore, he must wait for the next ensuing season. Yet the premature hour of the Pequod's sailing had, perhaps, been covertly selected by Ahab, with a view to this very complexion of things. Because, an interval of three hundred and sixty-five days and nights was before him; an interval which, instead of impatiently enduring ashore, he would spend in a miscellaneous hunt; if by chance the White Whale, spending his vacation in seas far remote from his periodical feeding-grounds, should turn up his wrinkled brow off the Persian Gulf, or in the Bengal Bay, or China Seas, or in any other waters haunted by his race. So that Monsoons, Pampas, Nor-Westers, Harmattans, Trades; any wind but the Levanter and Simoom,[7] might blow Moby Dick into the devious zigzag world-circle of the Pequod's circumnavigating wake.

5. The optimal time for whaling in the mid-Pacific region along the equator ("the Line"), indicated later as being in January.
6. An imaginary belt in the heavens, usually sixteen degrees wide, that encompasses the apparent paths of the moon and the principal planets and that has the ecliptic, the sun's path, as its central line. It is divided into twelve constellations, or signs, each taken for astrological purposes to extend thirty degrees of longitude.
7. A Near East and Arabian easterly wind. "Monsoons": a periodic, very rainy wind in the Indian Ocean. "Pampas": an Argentine wind. "Nor-Westers": a northwest wind on the African Atlantic coast. "Harmattans": a northeast wind. "Trades": winds from northeast or southeast along the equator. "Levanter": a Mediterranean east wind.

But granting all this; yet, regarded discreetly and coolly, seems it not but a mad idea, this; that in the broad boundless ocean, one solitary whale, even if encountered, should be thought capable of individual recognition from his hunter, even as a white-bearded Mufti[8] in the thronged thoroughfares of Constantinople? No. For the peculiar snow-white brow of Moby Dick, and his snow-white hump, could not but be unmistakable. And have I not tallied[9] the whale, Ahab would mutter to himself, as after poring over his charts till long after midnight he would throw himself back in reveries—tallied him, and shall he escape? His broad fins are bored, and scalloped out like a lost sheep's ear! And here, his mad mind would run on in a breathless race; till a weariness and faintness of pondering came over him; and in the open air of the deck he would seek to recover his strength. Ah, God! what trances of torments does that man endure who is consumed with one unachieved revengeful desire. He sleeps with clenched hands; and wakes with his own bloody nails in his palms.[1]

Often, when forced from his hammock by exhausting and intolerably vivid dreams of the night, which, resuming his own intense thoughts through the day, carried them on amid a clashing of phrensies, and whirled them round and round in his blazing brain, till the very throbbing of his life-spot became insufferable anguish; and when, as was sometimes the case, these spiritual throes in him heaved his being up from its base, and a chasm seemed opening in him, from which forked flames and lightnings shot up, and accursed fiends beckoned him to leap down among them; when this hell in himself[2] yawned beneath him, a wild cry would be heard through the ship; and with glaring eyes Ahab would burst from his state room, as though escaping from a bed that was on fire. Yet these, perhaps, instead of being the unsuppressable symptoms of some latent weakness, or fright at his own resolve, were but the plainest tokens of its intensity. For, at such times, crazy Ahab, the scheming, unappeasedly steadfast hunter of the white whale; this Ahab that had gone to his hammock, was not the agent that so caused him to burst from it in horror again. The latter was the eternal, living principle or soul in him; and in sleep, being for the time dissociated from the characterizing mind, which at other times employed it for its outer vehicle or agent, it spontaneously sought escape from the scorching contiguity of the frantic thing, of which, for the time, it was no longer an integral. But as the mind does not exist unless leagued with the soul, therefore it must have been that, in Ahab's case, yielding up all his thoughts and fancies to his one supreme purpose; that purpose, by its own sheer inveteracy of will, forced itself against gods and devils into a kind of self-assumed, independent being of its own. Nay, could grimly live and burn, while the common vitality to which it was conjoined, fled horror-stricken from the unbidden and unfathered birth. Therefore, the tormented spirit that glared out of bodily eyes, when what seemed Ahab rushed from his room, was for the time but a vacated thing, a formless somnambulistic being, a ray of living light, to be sure, but without an object to color, and therefore a blankness in itself. God help thee, old man, thy thoughts have created a creature in thee; and he whose intense

8. A professional interpreter of Muslim law.
9. Reckoned and recorded.
1. Partially crucifying himself.
2. See Sir Thomas Browne's *Religio Medici* (1643), 1.55 and John Milton's *Paradise Lost* (1667), 4.75.

thinking thus makes him a Prometheus;[3] a vulture feeds upon that heart for ever; that vulture the very creature he creates.

CHAPTER 45

THE AFFIDAVIT

So far as what there may be of a narrative in this book; and, indeed, as indirectly touching one or two very interesting and curious particulars in the habits of sperm whales, the foregoing chapter, in its earlier part, is as important a one as will be found in this volume; but the leading matter of it requires to be still further and more familiarly enlarged upon, in order to be adequately understood, and moreover to take away any incredulity which a profound ignorance of the entire subject may induce in some minds, as to the natural verity of the main points of this affair.

I care not to perform this part of my task methodically; but shall be content to produce the desired impression by separate citations of items, practically or reliably known to me as a whaleman; and from these citations, I take it—the conclusion aimed at will naturally follow of itself.

First: I have personally known three instances where a whale, after receiving a harpoon, has effected a complete escape; and, after an interval (in one instance of three years), has been again struck by the same hand, and slain; when the two irons, both marked by the same private cypher, have been taken from the body. In the instance where three years intervened between the flinging of the two harpoons; and I think it may have been something more than that; the man who darted them happening, in the interval, to go in a trading ship on a voyage to Africa, went ashore there, joined a discovery party, and penetrated far into the interior, where he travelled for a period of nearly two years, often endangered by serpents, savages, tigers, poisonous miasmas, with all the other common perils incident to wandering in the heart of unknown regions. Meanwhile, the whale he had struck must also have been on its travels; no doubt it had thrice circumnavigated the globe, brushing with its flanks all the coasts of Africa; but to no purpose. This man and this whale again came together, and the one vanquished the other. I say I, myself, have known three instances similar to this; that is in two of them I saw the whales struck; and, upon the second attack, saw the two irons with the respective marks cut in them, afterwards taken from the dead fish. In the three-year instance, it so fell out that I was in the boat both times, first and last, and the last time distinctly recognized a peculiar sort of huge mole under the whale's eye, which I had observed there three years previous. I say three years, but I am pretty sure it was more than that. Here are three instances, then, which I personally know the truth of; but I have heard of many other instances from persons whose veracity in the matter there is no good ground to impeach.

Secondly: It is well known in the Sperm Whale Fishery, however ignorant the world ashore may be of it, that there have been several memorable

3. In Greek myth, one of the Titans, who stole fire from heaven and gave it to humankind. Zeus punished him by chaining him to a rock where daily a vulture devoured his liver, which each night was made whole again. Mansfield and Vincent (p. 719) cite parallel allusions in Shelley's *Prometheus Unbound* (1820, 1.34–37) and Lord Byron's *Manfred* (1817, 3.4.127–40).

historical instances where a particular whale in the ocean has been at distant times and places popularly cognisable. Why such a whale became thus marked was not altogether and originally owing to his bodily peculiarities as distinguished from other whales; for however peculiar in that respect any chance whale may be, they soon put an end to his peculiarities by killing him, and boiling him down into a peculiarly valuable oil. No: the reason was this: that from the fatal experiences of the fishery there hung a terrible prestige of perilousness about such a whale as there did about Rinaldo Rinaldini,[1] insomuch that most fishermen were content to recognise him by merely touching their tarpaulins[2] when he would be discovered lounging by them on the sea, without seeking to cultivate a more intimate acquaintance. Like some poor devils ashore that happen to know an irascible great man, they make distant unobtrusive salutations to him in the street, lest if they pursued the acquaintance further, they might receive a summary thump for their presumption.

But not only did each of these famous whales enjoy great individual celebrity—nay, you may call it an ocean-wide renown; not only was he famous in life and now is immortal in forecastle stories after death, but he was admitted into all the rights, privileges, and distinctions of a name; had as much a name indeed as Cambyses or Cæsar.[3] Was it not so, O Timor Jack! thou famed leviathan, scarred like an iceberg, who so long did'st lurk in the Oriental straits of that name, whose spout was oft seen from the palmy beach of Ombay? Was it not so, O New Zealand Tom! thou terror of all cruisers that crossed their wakes in the vicinity of the Tattoo Land?[4] Was it not so, O Morquan! King of Japan, whose lofty jet they say at times assumed the semblance of a snow-white cross against the sky? Was it not so, O Don Miguel![5] thou Chilian whale, marked like an old tortoise with mystic hieroglyphics upon the back! In plain prose, here are four whales as well known to the students of Cetacean History as Marius or Sylla[6] to the classic scholar.

But this is not all. New Zealand Tom and Don Miguel, after at various times creating great havoc among the boats of different vessels, were finally gone in quest of, systematically hunted out, chased and killed by valiant whaling captains, who heaved up their anchors with that express object as much in view, as in setting out through the Narragansett Woods, Captain Church of old had it in his mind to capture that notorious murderous savage Annawon,[7] the headmost warrior of the Indian King Philip.

I do not know where I can find a better place than just here, to make mention of one or two other things, which to me seem important, as in printed form establishing in all respects the reasonableness of the whole

1. Knight in Italian Renaissance epics by Arisoto and Tasso.
2. I.e., saluting him by touching their hats (tarred to repel water).
3. Cambyses II, warrior king of Persia (529–522 B.C.E.), ranting hero of a play by Thomas Preston, older contemporary of Shakespeare, whose Falstaff pontificates "in King Cambyses' vein" of bombastic rhetoric in *I Henry IV* (2.4.396–485).
4. New Zealand, whose Maori natives practiced extensive tattooing. The "Oriental straits" refers to the Timor Sea, between Timor and northern Australia. Ombay is an island somewhat farther north.
5. As Vincent (1949) points out, Melville found "Timor Jack" and "New Zealand Tom" in Beale (1839), but may have invented Morquan and Don Miguel.
6. Marius and Sulla (the more common spelling) were rival Roman generals responsible for the civil war in the 2nd century B.C.E.
7. Captured in 1676 by Captain Benjamin Church. The 1851 editions gave the name "Butler" here, for Lieutenant Colonel William Butler, who pursued the Mohawk Indian leader Joseph Brandt in 1778. Apparently Melville mistakenly wrote down the wrong name as he recalled stories of his Gansevoort grandfather's Revolutionary exploits.

story of the White Whale, more especially the catastrophe. For this is one of those disheartening instances where truth requires full as much bolstering as error. So ignorant are most landsmen of some of the plainest and most palpable wonders of the world, that without some hints touching the plain facts, historical and otherwise, of the fishery, they might scout at Moby Dick as a monstrous fable, or still worse and more detestable, a hideous and intolerable allegory.[8]

First: Though most men have some vague flitting ideas of the general perils of the grand fishery, yet they have nothing like a fixed, vivid conception of those perils, and the frequency with which they recur. One reason perhaps is, that not one in fifty of the actual disasters and deaths by casualties in the fishery, ever finds a public record at home, however transient and immediately forgotten that record. Do you suppose that that poor fellow there, who this moment perhaps caught by the whale-line off the coast of New Guinea, is being carried down to the bottom of the sea by the sounding leviathan—do you suppose that that poor fellow's name will appear in the newspaper obituary you will read to-morrow at your breakfast? No: because the mails are very irregular between here and New Guinea. In fact, did you ever hear what might be called regular news direct or indirect from New Guinea? Yet I tell you that upon one particular voyage which I made to the Pacific, among many others, we spoke thirty different ships, every one of which had had a death by a whale,[9] some of them more than one, and three that had each lost a boat's crew. For God's sake, be economical with your lamps and candles! not a gallon you burn, but at least one drop of man's blood was spilled for it.

Secondly: People ashore have indeed some indefinite idea that a whale is an enormous creature of enormous power; but I have ever found that when narrating to them some specific example of this two-fold enormousness, they have significantly complimented me upon my facetiousness; when, I declare upon my soul, I had no more idea of being facetious than Moses, when he wrote the history of the plagues of Egypt.[1]

But fortunately the special point I here seek can be established upon testimony entirely independent of my own. That point is this: The Sperm Whale is in some cases sufficiently powerful, knowing, and judiciously malicious, as with direct aforethought to stave in, utterly destroy, and sink a large ship; and what is more, the Sperm Whale *has* done it.

First: In the year 1820 the ship Essex, Captain Pollard, of Nantucket, was cruising in the Pacific Ocean. One day she saw spouts, lowered her boats, and gave chase to a shoal of sperm whales. Ere long, several of the whales were wounded; when, suddenly, a very large whale escaping from the boats, issued from the shoal, and bore directly down upon the ship. Dashing his forehead against her hull, he so stove her in, that in less than "ten minutes" she settled down and fell over. Not a surviving plank of her has been seen since. After the severest exposure, part of the crew reached

8. Here, meaning a sort of rigid symbol where one thing stands only and always for a particular other thing. Melville is not referring to the book *Moby-Dick*, the working title of which was *The Whale*, but to the white whale.
9. The 1967 Norton Critical Edition first put a comma after "many others," making it clear that Ishmael has made "many" voyages to the Pacific (as references show in Chs. 54 and 102); here, the point is that each of the ships encountered on this particular voyage had lost at least one man to a whale.
1. Told in Exodus 7–12, then supposed to have been written by Moses.

the land in their boats. Being returned home at last, Captain Pollard once more sailed for the Pacific in command of another ship, but the gods shipwrecked him again upon unknown rocks and breakers; for the second time his ship was utterly lost, and forthwith forswearing the sea, he has never tempted it since. At this day Captain Pollard is a resident of Nantucket. I have seen Owen Chase,[2] who was chief mate of the Essex at the time of the tragedy; I have read his plain and faithful narrative; I have conversed with his son; and all this within a few miles of the scene of the catastrophe.[3]

Secondly: The ship Union, also of Nantucket, was in the year 1807 totally lost off the Azores by a similar onset, but the authentic particulars of this catastrophe I have never chanced to encounter, though from the whale hunters I have now and then heard casual allusions to it.

Thirdly: Some eighteen or twenty years ago Commodore J——[4] then commanding an American sloop-of-war of the first class, happened to be dining with a party of whaling captains, on board a Nantucket ship in the harbor of Oahu, Sandwich Islands. Conversation turning upon whales, the Commodore was pleased to be skeptical touching the amazing strength ascribed to them by the professional gentlemen present. He peremptorily denied for example, that any whale could so smite his stout sloop-of-war as to cause her to leak so much as a thimbleful. Very good; but there is more coming. Some weeks after, the Commodore set sail in this impregnable craft for Valparaiso. But he was stopped on the way by a portly sperm whale, that begged a few moments' confidential business with him. That business consisted in fetching the Commodore's craft such a thwack, that with all his pumps going he made straight for the nearest port to heave down and repair. I am not superstitious, but I consider the Commodore's interview with that whale as providential. Was not Saul of Tarsus[5] converted from unbelief by a similar fright? I tell you, the sperm whale will stand no nonsense.

I will now refer you to Langsdorff's Voyages[6] for a little circumstance in point, peculiarly interesting to the writer hereof. Langsdorff, you must know by the way, was attached to the Russian Admiral Krusenstern's

2. For Chase's narrative and Melville's manuscript notes on him, his son, and Captain Pollard (whom he glimpsed in 1852, after publishing *Moby-Dick*), see "Sources and Influences" (pp. 502–03). Melville conversed with a son of Chase while the *Acushnet* was sailing in company with the whaler he was on, in the Pacific; young Chase loaned him a copy of the *Narrative* which Melville read there, near enough the site of the *Essex* disaster to make the reading memorable. Other Chase family members were captains, and later Melville was convinced, mistakenly, that he had seen Owen Chase himself in the Pacific.
3. Here, "catastrophe": the end of the book [eds. note].
*The following are extracts from Chase's narrative: "Every fact seemed to warrant me in concluding that it was anything but chance which directed his operations; he made two several attacks upon the ship, at a short interval between them, both of which, according to their direction, were calculated to do us the most injury, by being made ahead, and thereby combining the speed of the two objects for the shock; to effect which, the exact manoeuvres which he made were necessary. His aspect was most horrible, and such as indicated resentment and fury. He came directly from the shoal which we had just before entered, and in which we had struck three of his companions, as if fired with revenge for their sufferings." Again: "At all events, the whole circumstances taken together, all happening before my own eyes, and producing, at the time, impressions in my mind of decided, calculating mischief, on the part of the whale (many of which impressions I cannot now recall) induce me to be satisfied that I am correct in my opinion." [Melville's note.]
4. Commodore Thomas ap Catesby Jones; the episode presumably occurred when he commanded the *Peacock* in 1825. "Valparaiso": port on the coast of Chile.
5. Acts 9:3–4, 6; while persecuting the new Christians, Saul set out from Jerusalem for Damascus; on the way, a sudden light from heaven made him fall to the ground and the voice of Jesus challenged him; temporarily blinded, he became the apostle Paul (or Saint Paul).
6. George H. von Langsdorff, *Voyages and Travels in Various Parts of the World* (1813–14); Adam Ivan Krusenstern (1770–1846), first Russian to circumnavigate the globe, author of *Voyage round the World, in the Years 1803–1806* (1813).

famous Discovery Expedition in the beginning of the present century. Captain Langsdorff thus begins his seventeenth chapter.

"By the thirteenth of May our ship was ready to sail, and the next day we were out in the open sea, on our way to Ochotsh.[7] The weather was very clear and fine, but so intolerably cold that we were obliged to keep on our fur clothing. For some days we had very little wind; it was not till the nineteenth that a brisk gale from the northwest sprang up. An uncommon large whale, the body of which was larger than the ship itself, lay almost at the surface of the water, but was not perceived by any one on board till the moment when the ship, which was in full sail, was almost upon him, so that it was impossible to prevent its striking against him. We were thus placed in the most imminent danger, as this gigantic creature, setting up its back, raised the ship three feet at least out of the water. The masts reeled, and the sails fell altogether, while we who were below all sprang instantly upon the deck, concluding that we had struck upon some rock; instead of this we saw the monster sailing off with the utmost gravity and solemnity. Captain D'Wolf applied immediately to the pumps to examine whether or not the vessel had received any damage from the shock, but we found that very happily it had escaped entirely uninjured."

Now, the Captain D'Wolf here alluded to as commanding the ship in question, is a New Englander, who, after a long life of unusual adventures as a sea-captain, this day resides in the village of Dorchester near Boston. I have the honor of being a nephew of his. I have particularly questioned him concerning this passage in Langsdorff.[8] He substantiates every word. The ship, however, was by no means a large one: a Russian craft built on the Siberian coast, and purchased by my uncle after bartering away the vessel in which he sailed from home.

In that up and down manly book of old-fashioned adventure, so full, too, of honest wonders—the voyage of Lionel Wafer,[9] one of ancient Dampier's old chums—I found a little matter set down so like that just quoted from Langsdorff, that I cannot forbear inserting it here for a corroborative example, if such be needed.

Lionel, it seems, was on his way to "John Ferdinando," as he calls the modern Juan Fernandes.[1] "In our way thither," he says, "about four o'clock in the morning, when we were about one hundred and fifty leagues from the Main[2] of America, our ship felt a terrible shock, which put our men in such consternation that they could hardly tell where they were or what to think; but every one began to prepare for death. And, indeed, the shock was so sudden and violent, that we took it for granted the ship had struck against a rock; but when the amazement was a little over, we cast the lead, and sounded, but found no ground. * * * * * The suddenness of the shock made the guns leap in their carriages, and several of the men were shaken

7. Town on the Sea of Okhotsk, on the northwest Pacific coast, near Russia.
8. John D'Wolf (1779–1872), the adventurous "Nor'west John," was the husband of Melville's paternal aunt Mary (1778–1859). Among their children was Melville's cousin "Langs," Langsdorff D'Wolf.
9. The quotation that follows is from his *A New Voyage and Description of the Isthmus of America* (1699); he had sailed with the buccaneer William Dampier as the ship's surgeon.
1. Three Chilean Pacific Islands, famous as the scene of the actual abandonment of Alexander Selkirk on which Daniel Defoe based his *Robinson Crusoe* (1719), although Defoe changed the locale to the Caribbean.
2. I.e., the mainland of South America.

out of their hammocks. Captain Davis, who lay with his head over[3] a gun, was thrown out of his cabin!" Lionel then goes on to impute the shock to an earthquake, and seems to substantiate the imputation by stating that a great earthquake, somewhere about that time, did actually do great mischief along the Spanish land. But I should not much wonder if, in the darkness of that early hour of the morning, the shock was after all caused by an unseen whale vertically bumping the hull from beneath.

I might proceed with several more examples, one way or another known to me, of the great power and malice at times of the sperm whale. In more than one instance, he has been known, not only to chase the assailing boats back to their ships, but to pursue the ship itself, and long withstand all the lances hurled at him from its decks. The English ship Pusie Hall[4] can tell a story on that head; and, as for his strength, let me say, that there have been examples where the lines attached to a running sperm whale have, in a calm, been transferred to the ship, and secured there; the whale towing her great hull through the water, as a horse walks off with a cart. Again, it is very often observed that, if the sperm whale, once struck, is allowed time to rally, he then acts, not so often with blind rage, as with wilful, deliberate designs of destruction to his pursuers; nor is it without conveying some eloquent indication of his character, that upon being attacked he will frequently open his mouth, and retain it in that dread expansion for several consecutive minutes. But I must be content with only one more and a concluding illustration; a remarkable and most significant one, by which you will not fail to see, that not only is the most marvellous event in this book corroborated by plain facts of the present day, but that these marvels (like all marvels) are mere repetitions of the ages; so that for the millionth time we say amen with Solomon—Verily there is nothing new under the sun.[5]

In the sixth Christian century lived Procopius,[6] a Christian magistrate of Constantinople, in the days when Justinian was Emperor and Belisarius general. As many know, he wrote the history of his own times, a work every way of uncommon value. By the best authorities, he has always been considered a most trustworthy and unexaggerating historian, except in some one or two particulars, not at all affecting the matter presently to be mentioned.

Now, in this history of his, Procopius mentions that, during the term of his prefecture at Constantinople, a great sea-monster was captured in the neighboring Propontis, or Sea of Marmora, after having destroyed vessels at intervals in those waters for a period of more than fifty years. A fact thus set down in substantial history cannot easily be gainsaid. Nor is there any reason it should be. Of what precise species this sea-monster was, is not mentioned. But as he destroyed ships, as well as for other reasons, he must have been a whale; and I am strongly inclined to think a sperm whale. And I will tell you why. For a long time I fancied that the sperm whale had been always unknown in the Mediterranean and the deep waters connecting

3. Wafer has the correct "head over a gun" where both 1851 editions had "head on a gun." The preceding asterisks are Melville's.
4. Melville found this 1835 story in Bennett's *Narrative* (1840).
5. Paraphrased from Ecclesiastes 1.9 (a book commonly attributed to King Solomon, one of Melville's favorite wise men).
6. Vincent (1949, p. 273) shows that Melville's source for this paragraph was the article "Whales" in *Cyclopædia of Biblical Literature* (1845), edited by John Kitto.

with it. Even now I am certain that those seas are not, and perhaps never can be, in the present constitution of things, a place for his habitual gregarious resort. But further investigations have recently proved to me, that in modern times there have been isolated instances of the presence of the sperm whale in the Mediterranean. I am told, on good authority, that on the Barbary coast, a Commodore Davis of the British navy found the skeleton of a sperm whale. Now, as a vessel of war readily passes through the Dardanelles,[7] hence a sperm whale could, by the same route, pass out of the Mediterranean into the Propontis.

In the Propontis, as far as I can learn, none of that peculiar substance called *brit* is to be found, the aliment of the right whale. But I have every reason to believe that the food of the sperm whale—squid or cuttle-fish—lurks at the bottom of that sea, because large creatures, but by no means the largest of that sort, have been found at its surface. If, then, you properly put these statements together, and reason upon them a bit, you will clearly perceive that, according to all human reasoning, Procopius's sea-monster, that for half a century stove the ships of a Roman Emperor, must in all probability have been a sperm whale.

CHAPTER 46

SURMISES

Though, consumed with the hot fire of his purpose, Ahab in all his thoughts and actions ever had in view the ultimate capture of Moby Dick; though he seemed ready to sacrifice all mortal interests to that one passion; nevertheless it may have been that he was by nature and long habituation far too wedded to a fiery whaleman's ways, altogether to abandon the collateral prosecution of the voyage. Or at least if this were otherwise, there were not wanting other motives much more influential with him. It would be refining too much, perhaps, even considering his monomania, to hint that his vindictiveness towards the White Whale might have possibly extended itself in some degree to all sperm whales, and that the more monsters he slew by so much the more he multiplied the chances that each subsequently encountered whale would prove to be the hated one he hunted. But if such an hypothesis be indeed exceptionable, there were still additional considerations which, though not so strictly according with the wildness of his ruling passion, yet were by no means incapable of swaying him.

To accomplish his object Ahab must use tools; and of all tools used in the shadow of the moon, men are most apt to get out of order. He knew, for example, that however magnetic his ascendency in some respects was over Starbuck, yet that ascendency did not cover the complete spiritual man any more than mere corporeal superiority involves intellectual mastership; for to the purely spiritual, the intellectual but stands in a sort of corporeal relation. Starbuck's body and Starbuck's coerced will were Ahab's, so long as Ahab kept his magnet at Starbuck's brain; still he knew that for all this the chief mate, in his soul, abhorred his captain's quest, and could he, would joyfully disintegrate himself from it, or even frustrate it. It might be that a long interval would elapse ere the White Whale

7. Described in Ch. 58.

was seen. During that long interval Starbuck would ever be apt to fall into open relapses of rebellion against his captain's leadership, unless some ordinary; prudential, circumstantial influences were brought to bear upon him. Not only that, but the subtle insanity of Ahab respecting Moby Dick was noways more significantly manifested than in his superlative sense and shrewdness in foreseeing that, for the present, the hunt should in some way be stripped of that strange imaginative impiousness which naturally invested it; that the full terror of the voyage must be kept withdrawn into the obscure background (for few men's courage is proof against protracted meditation unrelieved by action); that when they stood their long night watches, his officers and men must have some nearer things to think of than Moby Dick. For however eagerly and impetuously the savage crew had hailed the announcement of his quest; yet all sailors of all sorts are more or less capricious and unreliable—they live in the varying outer weather, and they inhale its fickleness—and when retained for any object remote and blank in the pursuit, however promissory of life and passion in the end, it is above all things requisite that temporary interests and employments should intervene and hold them healthily suspended for the final dash.

Nor was Ahab unmindful of another thing. In times of strong emotion mankind disdain all base considerations; but such times are evanescent. The permanent constitutional condition of the manufactured man, thought Ahab, is sordidness. Granting that the White Whale fully incites the hearts of this my savage crew, and playing round their savageness even breeds a certain generous knight-errantism in them, still, while for the love of it they give chase to Moby Dick, they must also have food for their more common, daily appetites. For even the high lifted and chivalric Crusaders of old times were not content to traverse two thousand miles of land to fight for their holy sepulchre, without committing burglaries, picking pockets, and gaining other pious perquisites by the way.[1] Had they been strictly held to their one final and romantic object—that final and romantic object, too many would have turned from in disgust. I will not strip these men, thought Ahab, of all hopes of cash—aye, cash. They may scorn cash now; but let some months go by, and no perspective[2] promise of it to them, and then this same quiescent cash all at once mutinying in them, this same cash would soon cashier[3] Ahab.

Nor was there wanting still another precautionary motive more related to Ahab personally. Having impulsively, it is probable, and perhaps somewhat prematurely revealed the prime but private purpose of the Pequod's voyage, Ahab was now entirely conscious that, in so doing, he had indirectly laid himself open to the unanswerable charge of usurpation; and with perfect impunity, both moral and legal, his crew if so disposed, and to that end competent, could refuse all further obedience to him, and even violently wrest from him the command. From even the barely hinted imputation of usurpation, and the possible consequences of such a suppressed impression gaining ground,

1. In this complicated passage, Melville has his narrator Ishmael surmise what was in Ahab's mind, and attribute to Ahab a genial view of "knight-errantism" tinged by the lovable idealism of the hero of *Don Quixote*. It is Ahab, also, as Ishmael reads his mind, who thinks ironically of the "high lifted and chivalric Crusaders," who in the 11th through 13th centuries fought to seize the Holy Land from the Muslims.
2. Prospective.
3. In this punning, to be cashiered is to be fired, by the ship owners.

Ahab must of course have been most anxious to protect himself. That protection could only consist in his own predominating brain and heart and hand, backed by a heedful, closely calculating attention to every minute atmospheric influence[4] which it was possible for his crew to be subjected to.

For all these reasons then, and others perhaps too analytic to be verbally developed here, Ahab plainly saw that he must still in a good degree continue true to the natural, nominal purpose of the Pequod's voyage; observe all customary usages; and not only that, but force himself to evince all his well known passionate interest in the general pursuit of his profession.

Be all this as it may, his voice was now often heard hailing the three mast-heads and admonishing them to keep a bright lookout, and not omit reporting even a porpoise. This vigilance was not long without reward.

CHAPTER 47

THE MAT-MAKER

It was a cloudy, sultry afternoon; the seamen were lazily lounging about the decks, or vacantly gazing over into the lead-colored waters. Queequeg and I were mildly employed weaving what is called a sword-mat,[1] for an additional lashing to our boat. So still and subdued and yet somehow preluding was all the scene, and such an incantation of revery lurked in the air, that each silent sailor seemed resolved into his own invisible self.

I was the attendant or page of Queequeg, while busy at the mat. As I kept passing and repassing the filling or woof of marline[2] between the long yarns of the warp, using my own hand for the shuttle, and as Queequeg, standing sideways, ever and anon slid his heavy oaken sword between the threads, and idly looking off upon the water, carelessly and unthinkingly drove home every yarn: I say so strange a dreaminess did there then reign all over the ship and all over the sea, only broken by the intermitting dull sound of the sword, that it seemed as if this were the Loom of Time,[3] and I myself were a shuttle mechanically weaving and weaving away at the Fates. There lay the fixed threads of the warp subject to but one single, ever returning, unchanging vibration, and that vibration merely enough to admit of the crosswise interblending of other threads with its own. This warp seemed necessity; and here, thought I, with my own hand I ply my own shuttle and weave my own destiny into these unalterable threads. Meantime, Queequeg's impulsive, indifferent sword, sometimes hitting the woof slantingly, or crookedly, or strongly, or weakly, as the case might be; and by this difference in the concluding blow producing a corresponding contrast in the final aspect of the completed fabric; this savage's sword,

4. Prescientific ideas that Melville knew from *King Lear* and other plays by Shakespeare and elsewhere (particularly Robert Burton's *The Anatomy of Melancholy*, 1621). He found such ideas useful in identifying psychological and physiological states.
1. Mat made of closely woven yarns, for padding, to prevent chafing; the name comes from the sword-shaped wooden (here, oak) slat used in the weaving.
2. Tarred rope.
3. A phrase Melville found in Thomas Carlyle's *Sartor Resartus* (1833–34, book 1, chapter 8), as a translation from Goethe's *Faust* (1808, 1832).

thought I, which thus finally shapes and fashions both warp and woof; this easy, indifferent sword must be chance—aye, chance, free will, and necessity—no wise incompatible—all interweavingly working together. The straight warp of necessity, not to be swerved from its ultimate course—its every alternating vibration, indeed, only tending to that; free will still free to ply her shuttle between given threads; and chance, though restrained in its play within the right lines of necessity, and sideways in its motions modified by free will, though thus prescribed to by both, chance by turns rules either, and has the last featuring blow at events.

* * * * * *

Thus we were weaving and weaving away when I started at a sound so strange, long drawn, and musically wild and unearthly, that the ball of free will dropped from my hand, and I stood gazing up at the clouds whence that voice dropped like a wing. High aloft in the cross-trees was that mad Gay-Header, Tashtego. His body was reaching eagerly forward, his hand stretched out like a wand, and at brief sudden intervals he continued his cries. To be sure the same sound was that very moment perhaps being heard all over the seas, from hundreds of whalemen's look-outs perched as high in the air; but from few of those lungs could that accustomed old cry have derived such a marvellous cadence as from Tashtego the Indian's.

As he stood hovering over you half suspended in air, so wildly and eagerly peering towards the horizon, you would have thought him some prophet or seer beholding the shadows of Fate, and by those wild cries announcing their coming.

"There she blows! there! there! there! she blows! she blows!"

"Where-away?"

"On the lee-beam, about two miles off! a school of them!"

Instantly all was commotion.

The Sperm Whale blows as a clock ticks, with the same undeviating and reliable uniformity. And thereby whalemen distinguish this fish from other tribes of his genus.

"There go flukes!" was now the cry from Tashtego; and the whales disappeared.

"Quick, steward!" cried Ahab. "Time! time!"

Dough-Boy hurried below, glanced at the watch, and reported the exact minute to Ahab.

The ship was now kept away from the wind, and she went gently rolling before it. Tashtego reporting that the whales had gone down heading to leeward, we confidently looked to see them again directly in advance of our bows. For that singular craft at times evinced by the Sperm Whale when, sounding with his head in one direction, he nevertheless, while concealed beneath the surface, mills round, and swiftly swims off in the opposite quarter—this deceitfulness of his could not now be in action; for there was no reason to suppose that the fish seen by Tashtego had been in any way alarmed, or indeed knew at all of our vicinity. One of the men selected for shipkeepers—that is, those not appointed to the boats, by this time relieved the Indian at the main-mast head. The sailors at the fore and mizzen had come down; the line tubs were fixed in their places; the cranes were thrust out; the mainyard was backed, and the three boats

swung over the sea like three samphire[4] baskets over high cliffs. Outside of the bulwarks their eager crews with one hand clung to the rail, while one foot was expectantly poised on the gunwale. So look the long line of man-of-war's men[5] about to throw themselves on board an enemy's ship.

But at this critical instant a sudden exclamation was heard that took every eye from the whale. With a start all glared at dark Ahab, who was surrounded by five dusky phantoms that seemed fresh formed out of air.

CHAPTER 48

THE FIRST LOWERING

The phantoms, for so they then seemed, were flitting on the other side of the deck, and, with a noiseless celerity, were casting loose the tackles and bands of the boat which swung there. This boat had always been deemed one of the spare boats, though technically called the captain's, on account of its hanging from the starboard quarter. The figure that now stood by its bows was tall and swart, with one white tooth evilly protruding from its steel-like lips. A rumpled Chinese jacket of black cotton funereally invested him, with wide trowsers of the same dark stuff. But strangely crowning this ebonness was a glistening white plaited turban, the living hair braided and coiled round and round upon his head. Less swart in aspect, the companions of this figure were of that vivid, tiger-yellow complexion peculiar to some of the aboriginal natives of the Manillas;—a race notorious for a certain diabolism of subtilty, and by some honest white mariners supposed to be the paid spies and secret confidential agents on the water of the devil, their lord, whose counting-room they suppose to be elsewhere.

While yet the wondering ship's company were gazing upon these strangers, Ahab cried out to the white-turbaned old man at their head, "All ready there, Fedallah?"

"Ready," was the half-hissed reply.

"Lower away then; d'ye hear?" shouting across the deck. "Lower away there, I say."

Such was the thunder of his voice, that spite of their amazement the men sprang over the rail; the sheaves whirled round in the blocks; with a wallow, the three boats dropped into the sea; while, with a dexterous, off-handed daring, unknown in any other vocation, the sailors, goat-like, leaped down the rolling ship's side into the tossed boats below.

Hardly had they pulled out from under the ship's lee, when a fourth keel, coming from the windward side, pulled round under the stern, and showed the five strangers rowing Ahab, who, standing erect in the stern, loudly hailed Starbuck, Stubb, and Flask, to spread themselves widely, so as to

4. A seacoast plant that can be pickled. The image is from *King Lear* (4.6.14–15), where "Halfway down" a cliff "Hangs one that gathers samphire, dreadful trade."
5. The crew of a warship. As an ordinary seaman aboard the frigate *United States* in 1843–44, Melville practiced this maneuver.

cover a large expanse of water. But with all their eyes again riveted upon the swart Fedallah and his crew, the inmates of the other boats obeyed not the command.

"Captain Ahab?—" said Starbuck.

"Spread yourselves," cried Ahab; "give way, all four boats. Thou, Flask, pull out more to leeward!"

"Aye, aye, sir," cheerily cried little King-Post, sweeping round his great steering oar. "Lay back!" addressing his crew. "There!—there!—there again! There she blows right ahead, boys!—lay back!—Never heed yonder yellow boys, Archy."

"Oh, I don't mind 'em, sir," said Archy; "I knew it all before now. Didn't I hear 'em in the hold? And didn't I tell Cabaco here of it? What say ye, Cabaco? They are stowaways, Mr. Flask."

"Pull, pull, my fine hearts-alive; pull, my children; pull, my little ones," drawlingly and soothingly sighed Stubb to his crew, some of whom still showed signs of uneasiness. "Why don't you break your backbones, my boys? What is it you stare at? Those chaps in yonder boat? Tut! They are only five more hands come to help us—never mind from where—the more the merrier. Pull, then, do pull; never mind the brimstone—devils are good fellows enough.[1] So, so; there you are now; that's the stroke for a thousand pounds; that's the stroke to sweep the stakes! Hurrah for the gold cup of sperm oil, my heroes! Three cheers, men—all hearts alive! Easy, easy; don't be in a hurry—don't be in a hurry. Why don't you snap your oars, you rascals? Bite something, you dogs! So, so, so, then;—softly, softly! That's it—that's it! long and strong. Give way there, give way![2] The devil fetch ye, ye ragamuffin rapscallions; ye are all asleep. Stop snoring, ye sleepers, and pull. Pull, will ye? pull, can't ye? pull, won't ye? Why in the name of gudgeons[3] and ginger-cakes don't ye pull?—pull and break something! pull, and start your eyes out! Here!" whipping out the sharp knife from his girdle; "every mother's son of ye draw his knife, and pull with the blade between his teeth. That's it—that's it. Now ye do something; that looks like it, my steel-bits.[4] Start her—start her, my silver-spoons![5] Start her, marling-spikes!"[6]

Stubb's exordium to his crew is given here at large, because he had rather a peculiar way of talking to them in general, and especially in inculcating the religion of rowing. But you must not suppose from this specimen of his sermonizings that he ever flew into downright passions with his congregation. Not at all; and therein consisted his chief peculiarity. He would say the most terrific things to his crew, in a tone so strangely compounded of fun and fury, and the fury seemed so calculated merely as a spice to the fun, that no oarsman could hear such queer invocations

1. Stubb's exordium (couched as coolly as a pep talk, but functioning as an inspiration to life-and-death battle) is offered as a masterpiece of whaleman's rhetoric, as the next paragraph makes clear. In J. N. Reynolds's "Mocha Dick" (on p. 510 herein), compare the paragraph beginning "As I spoke." Melville had great models.
2. Pull for your life (*not* "move aside").
3. Small freshwater fish.
4. Stories depict pirates as climbing onto their victims' decks with knives in their mouths, hands free for villainy, but rowing with knives in the mouth has been tested at Mystic Seaport and found to be unwise. Perhaps Stubb does not expect to be obeyed but in his humorous fantasy proceeds to visualize the men as his horses with metal bitts in their mouths.
5. Or else Stubb imagines that his men as babies had been fed with silver cutlery (as you could say Melville had been).
6. Now Stubb sees his men as tapering weapons, metal spikes used in working rope.

without pulling for dear life, and yet pulling for the mere joke of the thing. Besides he all the time looked so easy and indolent himself, so loungingly managed his steering-oar, and so broadly gaped—open-mouthed at times—that the mere sight of such a yawning commander, by sheer force of contrast, acted like a charm upon the crew. Then again, Stubb was one of those odd sort of humorists,[7] whose jollity is sometimes so curiously ambiguous, as to put all inferiors on their guard in the matter of obeying them.

In obedience to a sign from Ahab, Starbuck was now pulling obliquely across Stubb's bow; and when for a minute or so the two boats were pretty near to each other, Stubb hailed the mate.

"Mr. Starbuck! larboard boat there, ahoy! a word with ye, sir, if ye please!"

"Halloa!" returned Starbuck, turning round not a single inch as he spoke; still earnestly but whisperingly urging his crew; his face set like a flint from Stubb's.

"What think ye of those yellow boys, sir!"

"Smuggled on board, somehow, before the ship sailed. (Strong, strong, boys!)" in a whisper to his crew, then speaking out loud again: "A sad business, Mr. Stubb! (seethe[8] her, seethe her, my lads!) but never mind, Mr. Stubb, all for the best. Let all your crew pull strong, come what will. (Spring, my men, spring!) There's hogsheads[9] of sperm ahead, Mr. Stubb, and that's what ye came for. (Pull, my boys!) Sperm, sperm's the play! This at least is duty; duty and profit hand in hand!"

"Aye, aye, I thought as much," soliloquized Stubb, when the boats diverged, "as soon as I clapt eye on 'em, I thought so. Aye, and that's what he went into the after hold for, so often, as Dough-Boy long suspected. They were hidden down there. The White Whale's at the bottom of it. Well, well, so be it! Can't be helped! All right! Give way, men! It ain't the White Whale to-day! Give way!"

Now the advent of these outlandish strangers at such a critical instant as the lowering of the boats from the deck, this had not unreasonably awakened a sort of superstitious amazement in some of the ship's company; but Archy's fancied discovery having some time previous got abroad among them, though indeed not credited then, this had in some small measure prepared them for the event. It took off the extreme edge of their wonder; and so what with all this and Stubb's confident way of accounting for their appearance, they were for the time freed from superstitious surmisings; though the affair still left abundant room for all manner of wild conjectures as to dark Ahab's precise agency in the matter from the beginning. For me, I silently recalled the mysterious shadows I had seen creeping on board the Pequod during the dim Nantucket dawn, as well as the enigmatical hintings of the unaccountable Elijah.

Meantime, Ahab, out of hearing of his officers, having sided the furthest to windward, was still ranging ahead of the other boats; a circumstance bespeaking how potent a crew was pulling him. Those tiger yellow creatures of his seemed all steel and whalebone; like five trip-hammers they

7. Not *comedian* but one subject to a peculiarity of character because of the proportions of the four humors, or bodily fluids (according to medieval physiology)—in Stubb's case, his jollity.
8. Row so fast that the churning water will seem to boil ("seethe").
9. A large barrel, containing from 63 to 140 gallons.

rose and fell with regular strokes of strength, which periodically started the boat along the water like a horizontal burst boiler out of a Mississippi steamer. As for Fedallah, who was seen pulling the harpooneer oar,[1] he had thrown aside his black jacket, and displayed his naked chest with the whole part of his body above the gunwale, clearly cut against the alternating depressions of the watery horizon; while at the other end of the boat Ahab, with one arm, like a fencer's, thrown half backward into the air, as if to counterbalance any tendency to trip; Ahab was seen steadily managing his steering oar as in a thousand boat lowerings ere the White Whale had torn him. All at once the outstretched arm gave a peculiar motion and then remained fixed, while the boat's five oars were seen simultaneously peaked. Boat and crew sat motionless on the sea. Instantly the three spread boats in the rear paused on their way. The whales had irregularly settled bodily down into the blue, thus giving no distantly discernible token of the movement, though from his closer vicinity Ahab had observed it.

"Every man look out along his oar!" cried Starbuck. "Thou, Queequeg, stand up!"

Nimbly springing up on the triangular raised box in the bow, the savage stood erect there, and with intensely eager eyes gazed off towards the spot where the chase had last been descried. Likewise upon the extreme stern of the boat where it was also triangularly platformed level with the gunwale, Starbuck himself was seen coolly and adroitly balancing himself to the jerking tossings of his chip of a craft, and silently eyeing the vast blue eye of the sea.

Not very far distant Flask's boat was also lying breathlessly still; its commander recklessly standing upon the top of the loggerhead, a stout sort of post rooted in the keel, and rising some two feet above the level of the stern platform. It is used for catching turns with the whale line. Its top is not more spacious than the palm of a man's hand, and standing upon such a base as that, Flask seemed perched at the mast-head of some ship which had sunk to all but her trucks. But little King-Post was small and short, and at the same time little King-Post was full of a large and tall ambition, so that this loggerhead stand-point of his did by no means satisfy King-Post.

"I can't see three seas off; tip us up an oar there, and let me on to that."

Upon this, Daggoo, with either hand upon the gunwale to steady his way, swiftly slid aft, and then erecting himself volunteered his lofty shoulders for a pedestal.

"Good a mast-head as any, sir. Will you mount?"

"That I will, and thank ye very much, my fine fellow; only I wish you fifty feet taller."

Whereupon planting his feet firmly against two opposite planks of the boat, the gigantic negro, stooping a little, presented his flat palm to Flask's foot, and then putting Flask's hand on his hearse-plumed head and bidding him spring as he himself should toss, with one dexterous fling landed the little man high and dry on his shoulders. And here was Flask now standing, Daggoo with one lifted arm furnishing him with a breast-band to lean against and steady himself by.

1. In a whaleboat, each of the five oarsmen pulls a single oar; this one is the oar farthest forward, pulled by the harpooneer. The sixth man, at the stern, the boatsteerer, holds the steering oar.

At any time it is a strange sight to the tyro to see with what wondrous habitude of unconscious skill the whaleman will maintain an erect posture in his boat, even when pitched about by the most riotously perverse and cross-running seas. Still more strange to see him giddily perched upon the loggerhead itself, under such circumstances. But the sight of little Flask mounted upon gigantic Daggoo was yet more curious; for sustaining himself with a cool, indifferent, easy, unthought of, barbaric majesty, the noble negro to every roll of the sea harmoniously rolled his fine form. On his broad back, flaxen-haired Flask seemed a snow-flake. The bearer looked nobler than the rider. Though, truly, vivacious, tumultuous, ostentatious little Flask would now and then stamp with impatience; but not one added heave did he thereby give to the negro's lordly chest. So have I seen Passion and Vanity stamping the living magnanimous earth, but the earth did not alter her tides and her seasons for that.

Meanwhile Stubb, the second mate,[2] betrayed no such far-gazing solicitudes. The whales might have made one of their regular soundings, not a temporary dive from mere fright; and if that were the case, Stubb, as his wont in such cases, it seems, was resolved to solace the languishing interval with his pipe. He withdrew it from his hatband, where he always wore it aslant like a feather. He loaded it, and rammed home the loading with his thumb-end; but hardly had he ignited his match across the rough sandpaper of his hand, when Tashtego, his harpooneer, whose eyes had been setting to windward like two fixed stars, suddenly dropped like light from his erect attitude to his seat, crying out in a quick phrensy of hurry, "Down, down all, and give way!—there they are!"

To a landsman, no whale, nor any sign of a herring, would have been visible at that moment; nothing but a troubled bit of greenish white water, and thin scattered puffs of vapor hovering over it, and suffusingly blowing off to leeward, like the confused scud from white rolling billows. The air around suddenly vibrated and tingled, as it were, like the air over intensely heated plates of iron. Beneath this atmospheric waving and curling, and partially beneath a thin layer of water, also, the whales were swimming. Seen in advance of all the other indications, the puffs of vapor they spouted, seemed their forerunning couriers and detached flying outriders.

All four boats were now in keen pursuit of that one spot of troubled water and air. But it bade fair to outstrip them; it flew on and on, as a mass of interblending bubbles borne down a rapid stream from the hills.

"Pull, pull, my good boys," said Starbuck, in the lowest possible but intensest concentrated whisper to his men; while the sharp fixed glance from his eyes, darted straight ahead of the bow, almost seemed as two visible needles in two unerring binnacle compasses. He did not say much to his crew, though, nor did his crew say anything to him. Only the silence of the boat was at intervals startlingly pierced by one of his peculiar whispers, now harsh with command, now soft with entreaty.

How different the loud little King-Post. "Sing out and say something, my hearties. Roar and pull, my thunderbolts! Beach me, beach me on their black backs, boys; only do that for me, and I'll sign over to you my Martha's Vineyard plantation, boys; including wife and children, boys. Lay me

2. The third to be mentioned here (in rank, Stubb is the second mate).

on—lay me on! O Lord, Lord! but I shall go stark, staring mad: See! see that white water!" And so shouting, he pulled his hat from his head, and stamped up and down on it; then picking it up, flirted it far off upon the sea; and finally fell to rearing and plunging in the boat's stern like a crazed colt from the prairie.

"Look at that chap now," philosophically drawled Stubb, who, with his unlighted short pipe, mechanically retained between his teeth, at a short distance, followed after—"He's got fits, that Flask has. Fits? yes, give him fits—that's the very word—pitch fits into 'em. Merrily, merrily, hearts-alive. Pudding for supper, you know;—merry's the word. Pull, babes—pull, sucklings—pull, all. But what the devil are you hurrying about? Softly, softly, and steadily, my men. Only pull, and keep pulling; nothing more. Crack all your backbones, and bite your knives in two—that's all. Take it easy—why don't ye take it easy, I say, and burst all your livers and lungs!"

But what it was that inscrutable Ahab said to that tiger-yellow crew of his—these were words best omitted here; for you live under the blessed light of the evangelical land.[3] Only the infidel sharks in the audacious seas may give ear to such words, when, with tornado brow, and eyes of red murder, and foam-glued lips, Ahab leaped after his prey.

Meanwhile, all the boats tore on. The repeated specific allusions of Flask to "that whale," as he called the fictitious monster which he declared to be incessantly tantalizing his boat's bow with its tail—these allusions of his were at times so vivid and life-like, that they would cause some one or two of his men to snatch a fearful look over the shoulder. But this was against all rule; for the oarsmen must put out their eyes, and ram a skewer through their necks; usage pronouncing that they must have no organs but ears, and no limbs but arms, in these critical moments.

It was a sight full of quick wonder and awe! The vast swells of the omnipotent sea; the surging, hollow roar they made, as they rolled along the eight gunwales, like gigantic bowls in a boundless bowling-green; the brief suspended agony of the boat, as it would tip for an instant on the knife-like edge of the sharper waves, that almost seemed threatening to cut it in two; the sudden profound dip into the watery glens and hollows; the keen spurrings and goadings to gain the top of the opposite hill; the headlong, sled-like slide down its other side;—all these, with the cries of the headsmen and harpooneers, and the shuddering gasps of the oarsmen, with the wondrous sight of the ivory Pequod bearing down upon her boats with outstretched sails, like a wild hen after her screaming brood;—all this was thrilling. Not the raw recruit, marching from the bosom of his wife into the fever heat of his first battle; not the dead man's ghost encountering the first unknown phantom in the other world;—neither of these can feel stranger and stronger emotions than that man does, who for the first time finds himself pulling into the charmed, churned circle of the hunted sperm whale.

The dancing white water made by the chase was now becoming more and more visible, owing to the increasing darkness of the dun cloud-shadows flung upon the sea. The jets of vapor no longer blended, but tilted everywhere to right and left; the whales seemed separating their wakes. The

3. Lands blessed by the teachings of Christianity, specifically the four gospels. In Melville, evangelicals are usually associated with the "lower church" Protestant sects (the most missionary minded): Presbyterians, for example, were more evangelical than were Episcopalians.

boats were pulled more apart; Starbuck giving chase to three whales running dead to leeward. Our sail was now set, and, with the still rising wind, we rushed along; the boat going with such madness through the water, that the lee oars could scarcely be worked rapidly enough to escape being torn from the row-locks.

Soon we were running through a suffusing wide veil of mist; neither ship nor boat to be seen.

"Give way, men," whispered Starbuck, drawing still further aft the sheet of his sail; "there is time to kill a fish yet before the squall comes. There's white water again!—close to! Spring!"

Soon after, two cries in quick succession on each side of us denoted that the other boats had got fast; but hardly were they overheard, when with a lightning-like hurtling whisper Starbuck said: "Stand up!" and Queequeg, harpoon in hand, sprang to his feet.

Though not one of the oarsmen was then facing[4] the life and death peril so close to them ahead, yet with their eyes on the intense countenance of the mate in the stern of the boat, they knew that the imminent instant had come; they heard, too, an enormous wallowing sound as of fifty elephants stirring in their litter. Meanwhile the boat was still booming through the mist, the waves curling and hissing around us like the erected crests of enraged serpents.

"That's his hump. *There, there*, give it to him!" whispered Starbuck.

A short rushing sound leaped out of the boat; it was the darted iron of Queequeg. Then all in one welded commotion came an invisible push from astern, while forward the boat seemed striking on a ledge; the sail collapsed and exploded; a gush of scalding vapor shot up near by; something rolled and tumbled like an earthquake beneath us. The whole crew were half suffocated as they were tossed helter-skelter into the white curdling cream of the squall. Squall, whale, and harpoon had all blended together; and the whale, merely grazed by the iron, escaped.

Though completely swamped, the boat was nearly unharmed. Swimming round it we picked up the floating oars, and lashing them across the gunwale, tumbled back to our places. There we sat up to our knees in the sea, the water covering every rib and plank, so that to our downward gazing eyes the suspended craft seemed a coral boat grown up to us from the bottom of the ocean.[5]

The wind increased to a howl; the waves dashed their bucklers[6] together; the whole squall roared, forked, and crackled around us like a white fire upon the prairie, in which, unconsumed, we were burning; immortal in these jaws of death! In vain we hailed the other boats; as well roar to the live coals down the chimney of a flaming furnace as hail those boats in that storm. Meanwhile the driving scud, rack, and mist, grew darker with the shadows of night; no sign of the ship could be seen. The rising sea forbade all attempts to bale out the boat. The oars were useless as propellers, performing now the office of life-preservers. So, cutting the lashing of the waterproof match keg, after many failures Starbuck contrived to ignite the lamp in the lantern; then stretching it on a waif pole,[7] handed

4. They row facing the boat's stern.
5. Coral polyp colonies build up reefs from the ocean floor.
6. The wave crests clash together like the shields ("bucklers").
7. Marker attached to unsecured dead whales.

it to Queequeg as the standard-bearer of this forlorn hope. There, then, he sat, holding up that imbecile candle in the heart of that almighty forlornness. There, then, he sat, the sign and symbol of a man without faith, hopelessly holding up hope in the midst of despair.

Wet, drenched through, and shivering cold, despairing of ship or boat, we lifted up our eyes as the dawn came on. The mist still spread over the sea, the empty lantern lay crushed in the bottom of the boat. Suddenly Queequeg started to his feet, hollowing his hand to his ear. We all heard a faint creaking, as of ropes and yards hitherto muffled by the storm. The sound came nearer and nearer; the thick mists were dimly parted by a huge, vague form. Affrighted, we all sprang into the sea as the ship at last loomed into view, bearing right down upon us within a distance of not much more than its length.

Floating on the waves we saw the abandoned boat, as for one instant it tossed and gaped beneath the ship's bows like a chip at the base of a cataract; and then the vast hull rolled over it, and it was seen no more till it came up weltering astern. Again we swam for it, were dashed against it by the seas, and were at last taken up and safely landed on board. Ere the squall came close to, the other boats had cut loose from their fish and returned to the ship in good time. The ship had given us up, but was still cruising, if haply it might light upon some token of our perishing,—an oar or a lance pole.

CHAPTER 49

THE HYENA[1]

There are certain queer times and occasions in this strange mixed affair we call life when a man takes this whole universe for a vast practical joke, though the wit thereof he but dimly discerns, and more than suspects that the joke is at nobody's expense but his own. However, nothing dispirits, and nothing seems worth while disputing. He bolts down all events, all creeds, and beliefs, and persuasions, all hard things visible and invisible, never mind how knobby; as an ostrich of potent digestion gobbles down bullets and gun flints. And as for small difficulties and worryings, prospects of sudden disaster, peril of life and limb; all these, and death itself, seem to him only sly, good-natured hits, and jolly punches in the side bestowed by the unseen and unaccountable old joker. That odd sort of wayward mood I am speaking of, comes over a man only in some time of extreme tribulation; it comes in the very midst of his earnestness, so that what just before might have seemed to him a thing most momentous, now seems but a part of the general joke. There is nothing like the perils of whaling to breed this free and easy sort of genial, desperado philosophy; and with it I now regarded this whole voyage of the Pequod, and the great White Whale its object.

"Queequeg," said I, when they had dragged me, the last man, to the deck, and I was still shaking myself in my jacket to fling off the water;

1. The unnerving "laugh" of the vicious African and Asian carnivore sets the mood for Ishmael's view of the universe here, as "a vast practical joke."

"Queequeg, my fine friend, does this sort of thing often happen?" Without much emotion, though soaked through just like me, he gave me to understand that such things did often happen.

"Mr. Stubb," said I, turning to that worthy, who, buttoned up in his oil-jacket, was now calmly smoking his pipe in the rain; "Mr. Stubb, I think I have heard you say that of all whalemen you ever met, our chief mate, Mr. Starbuck, is by far the most careful and prudent. I suppose then, that going plump on a flying whale with your sail set in a foggy squall is the height of a whaleman's discretion?"

"Certain. I've lowered for whales from a leaking ship in a gale off Cape Horn."

"Mr. Flask," said I, turning to little King-Post, who was standing close by; "you are experienced in these things, and I am not. Will you tell me whether it is an unalterable law in this fishery, Mr. Flask, for an oarsman to break his own back pulling himself back-foremost into death's jaws?"

"Can't you twist that smaller?" said Flask. "Yes, that's the law. I should like to see a boat's crew backing water up to a whale face foremost. Ha, ha! the whale would give them squint for squint, mind that!"

Here then, from three impartial witnesses, I had a deliberate statement of the entire case. Considering, therefore, that squalls and capsizings in the water and consequent bivouacks on the deep, were matters of common occurrence in this kind of life; considering that at the superlatively critical instant of going on to the whale I must resign my life into the hands of him who steered the boat—oftentimes a fellow who at that very moment is in his impetuousness upon the point of scuttling the craft with his own frantic stampings; considering that the particular disaster to our own particular boat was chiefly to be imputed to Starbuck's driving on to his whale almost in the teeth of a squall, and considering that Starbuck, notwithstanding, was famous for his great heedfulness in the fishery; considering that I belonged to this uncommonly prudent Starbuck's boat; and finally considering in what a devil's chase I was implicated, touching the White Whale: taking all things together, I say, I thought I might as well go below and make a rough draft of my will. "Queequeg," said I, "come along, you shall be my lawyer, executor, and legatee."

It may seem strange that of all men sailors should be tinkering at their last wills and testaments, but there are no people in the world more fond of that diversion. This was the fourth time in my nautical life that I had done the same thing. After the ceremony was concluded upon the present occasion, I felt all the easier; a stone was rolled away from my heart.[2] Besides, all the days I should now live would be as good as the days that Lazarus lived after his resurrection; a supplementary clean gain of so many months or weeks as the case might be. I survived myself; my death and burial were locked up in my chest. I looked round me tranquilly and contentedly, like a quiet ghost with a clean conscience sitting inside the bars of a snug family vault.

2. An example of the biblical language that suffuses the book, heightening the significance of the episode without specifically alluding to Jesus's resurrection of Lazarus (John 11.39–44) or even to Matthew 28.2, Jesus's own resurrection from his tomb: "the angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door." For many of Melville's first readers, this sort of echo of the Bible was irreligious, not to be distinguished from outright "flings" at holy matters.

Now then, thought I, unconsciously rolling up the sleeves of my frock, here goes for a cool, collected dive at death and destruction, and the devil fetch the hindmost.[3]

CHAPTER 50

Ahab's Boat and Crew—Fedallah

"Who would have thought it, Flask!" cried Stubb; "if I had but one leg you would not catch me in a boat, unless maybe to stop the plug-hole with my timber toe. Oh! he's a wonderful old man!"

"I don't think it so strange, after all, on that account," said Flask. "If his leg were off at the hip, now, it would be a different thing. That would disable him; but he has one knee, and good part of the other left, you know."

"I don't know that, my little man; I never yet saw him kneel."

* * * * * *

Among whale-wise people it has often been argued whether, considering the paramount importance of his life to the success of the voyage, it is right for a whaling captain to jeopardize that life in the active perils of the chase. So Tamerlane's[1] soldiers often argued with tears in their eyes, whether that invaluable life of his ought to be carried into the thickest of the fight.

But with Ahab the question assumed a modified aspect. Considering that with two legs man is but a hobbling wight in all times of danger; considering that the pursuit of whales is always under great and extraordinary difficulties; that every individual moment, indeed, then comprises a peril; under these circumstances is it wise for any maimed man to enter a whaleboat in the hunt? As a general thing, the joint-owners of the Pequod must have plainly thought not.

Ahab well knew that although his friends at home would think little of his entering a boat in certain comparatively harmless vicissitudes of the chase, for the sake of being near the scene of action and giving his orders in person, yet for Captain Ahab to have a boat actually apportioned to him as a regular headsman in the hunt—above all for Captain Ahab to be supplied with five extra men, as that same boat's crew, he well knew that such generous conceits never entered the heads of the owners of the Pequod. Therefore he had not solicited a boat's crew from them, nor had he in any way hinted his desires on that head. Nevertheless he had taken private measures of his own touching all that matter. Until Archy's published discovery, the sailors had little foreseen it, though to be sure when, after being a little while out of port, all hands had concluded the customary business of fitting the whaleboats for service; when some time after this Ahab was now and then found bestirring himself in the matter of making thole-pins[2] with his own hands for what was thought to be one of the spare boats, and even solicitously cutting the small wooden skewers, which when the line is running out are pinned over the groove in the bow: when all this was observed in him, and particularly his solicitude in having an

3. Commitment to a risky enterprise, whatever the consequences (proverbial).

1. Mongol warrior (1336?–1405?), conqueror of much of central Asia and eastern Europe; ruthless hero of Christopher Marlowe's *Tamburlaine the Great* (written around 1587).

2. Wooden pegs set in pairs to keep oars in place.

extra coat of sheathing in the bottom of the boat, as if to make it better withstand the pointed pressure of his ivory limb; and also the anxiety he evinced in exactly shaping the thigh board, or clumsy cleat, as it is sometimes called, the horizontal piece in the boat's bow for bracing the knee against in darting or stabbing at the whale; when it was observed how often he stood up in that boat with his solitary knee fixed in the semi-circular depression in the cleat, and with the carpenter's chisel gouged out a little here and straightened it a little there; all these things, I say, had awakened much interest and curiosity at the time. But almost everybody supposed that this particular preparative heedfulness in Ahab must only be with a view to the ultimate chase of Moby Dick; for he had already revealed his intention to hunt that mortal monster in person. But such a supposition did by no means involve the remotest suspicion as to any boat's crew being assigned to that boat.

Now, with the subordinate phantoms, what wonder remained soon waned away; for in a whaler wonders soon wane. Besides, now and then such unaccountable odds and ends of strange nations come up from the unknown nooks and ash-holes[3] of the earth to man these floating outlaws of whalers; and the ships themselves often pick up such queer castaway creatures found tossing about the open sea on planks, bits of wreck, oars, whale-boats, canoes, blown-off Japanese junks, and what not; that Beelzebub[4] himself might climb up the side and step down into the cabin to chat with the captain, and it would not create any unsubduable excitement in the forecastle.

But be all this as it may, certain it is that while the subordinate phantoms soon found their place among the crew, though still as it were somehow distinct from them, yet that hair-turbaned Fedallah remained a muffled mystery to the last. Whence he came in a mannerly world like this, by what sort of unaccountable tie he soon evinced himself to be linked with Ahab's peculiar fortunes; nay, so far as to have some sort of a half-hinted influence; Heaven knows, but it might have been even authority over him; all this none knew. But one cannot sustain an indifferent air concerning Fedallah. He was such a creature as civilized, domestic people in the temperate zone only see in their dreams, and that but dimly; but the like of whom now and then glide among the unchanging Asiatic communities, especially the Oriental isles to the east of the continent—those insulated, immemorial, unalterable countries, which even in these modern days still preserve much of the ghostly aboriginalness of earth's primal generations, when the memory of the first man was a distinct recollection, and all men his descendants, unknowing whence he came, eyed each other as real phantoms, and asked of the sun and the moon why they were created and to what end; when though, according to Genesis,[5] the angels indeed consorted with the daughters of men, the devils also, add the uncanonical Rabbins, indulged in mundane amours.

3. Dumps where rubbish was burned.
4. Satan (in 2 Kings 1.2, the pagan god of Ekron). Literally "lord of the flies"; in John Milton's *Paradise Lost*, Satan's lieutenant.
5. Genesis 6.2: "the sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair; and they took them wives of all which they chose"; Genesis 6.4: "There were giants in the earth in those days; and also after that, when the sons of God came in unto the daughters of men, and they bare children to them, the same became mighty men which were of old, men of renown." Uncanonical sources are the book of Enoch and the book of Jubilees, which Melville may have read about in an encyclopedia but that are not in any Bible or Apocrypha he is known to have owned.

CHAPTER 51

THE SPIRIT-SPOUT[1]

Days, weeks passed, and under easy sail, the ivory Pequod had slowly swept across four several cruising-grounds; that off the Azores; off the Cape de Verdes; on the Plate (so called), being off the mouth of the Rio de la Plata; and the Carrol Ground, an unstaked, watery locality, southerly from St. Helena.

It was while gliding through these latter waters that one serene and moonlight night, when all the waves rolled by like scrolls of silver; and, by their soft, suffusing seethings, made what seemed a silvery silence, not a solitude: on such a silent night[2] a silvery jet was seen far in advance of the white bubbles at the bow. Lit up by the moon, it looked celestial; seemed some plumed and glittering god uprising from the sea. Fedallah first descried this jet. For of these moonlight nights, it was his wont to mount to the main-mast head, and stand a look-out there, with the same precision as if it had been day. And yet, though herds of whales were seen by night, not one whaleman in a hundred would venture a lowering for them. You may think with what emotions, then, the seamen beheld this old Oriental perched aloft at such unusual hours; his turban and the moon, companions in one sky. But when, after spending his uniform interval there for several successive nights without uttering a single sound; when, after all this silence, his unearthly voice was heard announcing that silvery, moon-lit jet, every reclining mariner started to his feet as if some winged spirit had lighted in the rigging, and hailed the mortal crew. "There she blows!" Had the trump of judgment blown, they could not have quivered more; yet still they felt no terror; rather pleasure. For though it was a most unwonted hour, yet so impressive was the cry, and so deliriously exciting, that almost every soul on board instinctively desired a lowering.

Walking the deck with quick, side-lunging strides, Ahab commanded the t'gallant sails and royals to be set, and every stunsail spread. The best man in the ship must take the helm. Then, with every mast-head manned, the piled-up craft rolled down before the wind. The strange, upheaving, lifting tendency of the taffrail breeze filling the hollows of so many sails, made the buoyant, hovering deck to feel like air beneath the feet; while still she rushed along, as if two antagonistic influences were struggling in her—one to mount direct to heaven, the other to drive yawingly to some horizontal goal. And had you watched Ahab's face that night, you would have thought that in him also two different things were warring. While his one live leg made lively echoes along the deck, every stroke of his dead limb sounded like a coffin-tap. On life and death this old man walked. But though the ship so swiftly sped, and though from every eye, like arrows, the eager glances shot, yet the silvery jet was no more seen that night. Every sailor swore he saw it once, but not a second time.

1. See Melville's comment on this chapter in his letter to Sophia Hawthorne, January 8, 1852, printed on p. 575 herein.
2. Echo of a phrase repeatedly used in Shakespeare's *Merchant of Venice* 5.1.1–25. See "Glimpses of Melville as Performer" (on p. 422 herein) for his portrayal of Shylock in scenes from this play in 1838.

This midnight-spout had almost grown a forgotten thing, when, some days after, lo! at the same silent hour, it was again announced: again it was descried by all; but upon making sail to overtake it, once more it disappeared as if it had never been. And so it served us night after night, till no one heeded it but to wonder at it. Mysteriously jetted into the clear moonlight, or starlight, as the case might be; disappearing again for one whole day, or two days; or three; and somehow seeming at every distinct repetition to be advancing still further and further in our van, this solitary jet seemed for ever alluring us on.

Nor with the immemorial superstition of their race, and in accordance with the preternaturalness, as it seemed, which in many things invested the Pequod, were there wanting some of the seamen who swore that whenever and wherever descried; at however remote times, or in however far apart latitudes and longitudes, that unnearable spout was cast by one selfsame whale; and that whale, Moby Dick. For a time, there reigned, too, a sense of peculiar dread at this flitting apparition, as if it were treacherously beckoning us on and on, in order that the monster might turn round upon us, and rend us[3] at last in the remotest and most savage seas.

These temporary apprehensions, so vague but so awful, derived a wondrous potency from the contrasting serenity of the weather, in which, beneath all its blue blandness, some thought there lurked a devilish charm, as for days and days we voyaged along, through seas so wearily, lonesomely mild, that all space, in repugnance to our vengeful errand, seemed vacating itself of life before our urn-like prow.

But, at last, when turning to the eastward, the Cape winds began howling around us, and we rose and fell upon the long, troubled seas that are there; when the ivory-tusked Pequod sharply bowed to the blast, and gored the dark waves in her madness, till, like showers of silver chips, the foam-flakes flew over her bulwarks; then all this desolate vacuity of life went away, but gave place to sights more dismal than before.

Close to our bows, strange forms in the water darted hither and thither before us; while thick in our rear flew the inscrutable sea-ravens. And every morning, perched on our stays, rows of these birds were seen; and spite of our hootings, for a long time obstinately clung to the hemp, as though they deemed our ship some drifting, uninhabited craft; a thing appointed to desolation, and therefore fit roosting-place for their homeless selves. And heaved and heaved, still unrestingly heaved the black sea, as if its vast tides were a conscience; and the great mundane soul[4] were in anguish and remorse for the long sin and suffering it had bred.

Cape of Good Hope, do they call ye? Rather Cape Tormentoso,[5] as called of yore; for long allured by the perfidious silences that before had attended us, we found ourselves launched into this tormented sea, where guilty beings transformed into those fowls and these fish, seemed condemned[6] to swim on everlastingly without any haven in store, or beat that black air

3. Again, not a full biblical allusion but an emergence of phraseology from Matthew 7.6: "lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you" (in the warning not to give to dogs what is holy and not to cast pearls before swine).
4. The great (pantheistic?) world soul; here, seen by Ishmael as responsible for humankind's sin and suffering and remorseful for causing it.
5. The name that Bartholomew Diaz (1450–1500) gave to the southern tip of Africa, which his ruler John II of Portugal strategically renamed the Cape of Good Hope. Melville seems to have thought the word meant "tormented," not "tempestuous."
6. Punishment reminiscent of that imposed on carnal sinners (guilty lovers) in the fifth canto of Dante's *Inferno*.

without any horizon. But calm, snow-white, and unvarying; still directing its fountain of feathers to the sky; still beckoning us on from before, the solitary jet would at times be descried.

During all this blackness of the elements, Ahab, though assuming for the time the almost continual command of the drenched and dangerous deck, manifested the gloomiest reserve; and more seldom than ever addressed his mates. In tempestuous times like these, after everything above and aloft has been secured, nothing more can be done but passively to await the issue of the gale. Then Captain and crew become practical fatalists. So, with his ivory leg inserted into its accustomed hole, and with one hand firmly grasping a shroud, Ahab for hours and hours would stand gazing dead to windward, while an occasional squall of sleet or snow would all but congeal his very eyelashes together. Meantime, the crew driven from the forward part of the ship by the perilous seas that burstingly broke over its bows, stood in a line along the bulwarks in the waist; and the better to guard against the leaping waves, each man had slipped himself into a sort of bowline secured to the rail, in which he swung as in a loosened belt. Few or no words were spoken; and the silent ship, as if manned by painted sailors in wax, day after day tore on through all the swift madness and gladness of the demoniac waves. By night the same muteness of humanity before the shrieks of the ocean prevailed; still in silence the men swung in the bowlines; still wordless Ahab stood up to the blast. Even when wearied nature seemed demanding repose he would not seek that repose in his hammock. Never could Starbuck forget the old man's aspect, when one night going down into the cabin to mark how the barometer stood, he saw him with closed eyes sitting straight in his floor-screwed chair; the rain and half-melted sleet of the storm from which he had some time before emerged, still slowly dripping from the unremoved hat and coat. On the table beside him lay unrolled one of those charts of tides and currents which have previously been spoken of. His lantern swung from his tightly clenched hand. Though the body was erect, the head was thrown back so that the closed eyes were pointed towards the needle of the tell-tale that swung from a beam in the ceiling.[7]

Terrible old man! thought Starbuck with a shudder, sleeping in this gale, still thou steadfastly eyest thy purpose.

CHAPTER 52

THE ALBATROSS

South-eastward from the Cape, off the distant Crozetts,[1] a good cruising ground for Right Whalemen, a sail loomed ahead, the Goney (Albatross) by name. As she slowly drew nigh, from my lofty perch at the fore-mast-head, I had a good view of that sight so remarkable to a tyro in the far ocean fisheries—a whaler at sea, and long absent from home.

As if the waves had been fullers,[2] this craft was bleached like the skeleton of a stranded walrus. All down her sides, this spectral appearance

7. The cabin-compass is called the tell-tale, because without going to the compass at the helm, the Captain, while below, can inform himself of the course of the ship. [Melville's note.]
1. Five small islands, 1,500 miles southeast of the African coast.
2. Cleansers (workers or machines for fulling—cleansing—cloth during manufacture; hence the occupational surname Fuller).

was traced with long channels of reddened rust, while all her spars and her rigging were like the thick branches of trees furred over with hoar-frost. Only her lower sails were set. A wild sight it was to see her long-bearded look-outs at those three mast-heads. They seemed clad in the skins of beasts, so torn and bepatched the raiment that had survived nearly four years of cruising. Standing in iron hoops nailed to the mast, they swayed and swung over a fathomless sea; and though, when the ship slowly glided close under our stern, we six men in the air came so nigh to each other that we might almost have leaped from the mast-heads of one ship to those of the other; yet, those forlorn-looking fishermen, mildly eyeing us as they passed, said not one word to our own look-outs, while the quarter-deck hail was being heard from below.

"Ship ahoy! Have ye seen the White Whale?"

But as the strange captain, leaning over the pallid bulwarks, was in the act of putting his trumpet to his mouth, it somehow fell from his hand into the sea; and the wind now rising amain, he in vain strove to make himself heard without it. Meantime his ship was still increasing the distance between. While in various silent ways the seamen of the Pequod were evincing their observance of this ominous incident at the first mere mention of the White Whale's name to another ship, Ahab for a moment paused; it almost seemed as though he would have lowered a boat to board the stranger, had not the threatening wind forbade. But taking advantage of his windward position, he again seized his trumpet, and knowing by her aspect that the stranger vessel was a Nantucketer and shortly bound home, he loudly hailed—"Ahoy there! This is the Pequod, bound round the world! Tell them to address all future letters to the Pacific ocean! and this time three years, if I am not at home, tell them to address them to——"

At that moment the two wakes were fairly crossed, and instantly, then, in accordance with their singular ways, shoals of small harmless fish, that for some days before had been placidly swimming by our side, darted away with what seemed shuddering fins, and ranged themselves fore and aft with the stranger's flanks. Though in the course of his continual voyagings Ahab must often before have noticed a similar sight, yet, to any monomaniac man, the veriest trifles capriciously carry meanings.

"Swim away from me, do ye?" murmured Ahab, gazing over into the water. There seemed but little in the words, but the tone conveyed more of deep helpless sadness than the insane old man had ever before evinced. But turning to the steersman, who thus far had been holding the ship in the wind to diminish her headway, he cried out in his old lion voice,—"Up helm! Keep her off round the world!"

Round the world! There is much in that sound to inspire proud feelings; but whereto does all that circumnavigation conduct? Only through numberless perils to the very point whence we started, where those that we left behind secure, were all the time before us.

Were this world an endless plain, and by sailing eastward we could for ever reach new distances, and discover sights more sweet and strange than any Cyclades or Islands of King Solomon,[3] then there were promise in the voyage. But in pursuit of those far mysteries we dream of, or in tormented

3. Greek islands and the biblical King Solomon's fabled spice islands in the east (whence the name explorers gave to the Solomon Islands in the South Pacific).

chase of that demon phantom that, some time or other, swims before all human hearts; while chasing such over this round globe, they either lead us on in barren mazes or midway leave us whelmed.[4]

CHAPTER 53

THE GAM

The ostensible reason why Ahab did not go on board of the whaler we had spoken was this: the wind and sea betokened storms. But even had this not been the case, he would not after all, perhaps, have boarded her—judging by his subsequent conduct on similar occasions—if so it had been that, by the process of hailing, he had obtained a negative answer to the question he put. For, as it eventually turned out, he cared not to consort, even for five minutes, with any stranger captain, except he could contribute some of that information he so absorbingly sought. But all this might remain inadequately estimated, were not something said here of the peculiar usages of whaling-vessels when meeting each other in foreign seas, and especially on a common cruising-ground.

If two strangers crossing the Pine Barrens in New York State, or the equally desolate Salisbury Plain in England;[1] if casually encountering each other in such inhospitable wilds, these twain, for the life of them, cannot well avoid a mutual salutation; and stopping for a moment to interchange the news; and, perhaps, sitting down for a while and resting in concert: then, how much more natural that upon the illimitable Pine Barrens and Salisbury Plains of the sea, two whaling vessels descrying each other at the ends of the earth—off lone Fanning's Island, or the far away King's Mills;[2] how much more natural, I say, that under such circumstances these ships should not only interchange hails, but come into still closer, more friendly and sociable contact. And especially would this seem to be a matter of course, in the case of vessels owned in one seaport, and whose captains, officers, and not a few of the men are personally known to each other; and consequently, have all sorts of dear domestic things to talk about.

For the long absent ship, the outward-bounder, perhaps, has letters on board; at any rate, she will be sure to let her have some papers of a date a year or two later than the last one on her blurred and thumb-worn files. And in return for that courtesy, the outward-bound ship would receive the latest whaling intelligence from the cruising-ground to which she may be destined, a thing of the utmost importance to her. And in degree, all this will hold true concerning whaling vessels crossing each other's track on the cruising-ground itself, even though they are equally long absent from home. For one of them may have received a transfer of letters from some third, and now far remote vessel; and some of those letters may be for the people of the ship she now meets. Besides, they would exchange the whaling news, and have an agreeable chat. For not only would they meet with all the sympathies of sailors, but likewise with all the peculiar congenialities arising from a common pursuit and mutually shared privations and perils.

4. Engulfed.
1. The Pine Barrens is a region of sandy or peaty land in Long Island. Salisbury Plain, in south-central England, is the site of the ancient Stonehenge.
2. Islands in the mid-Pacific near the equator.

Nor would difference of country make any very essential difference; that is, so long as both parties speak one language, as is the case with Americans and English. Though, to be sure, from the small number of English whalers, such meetings do not very often occur, and when they do occur there is too apt to be a sort of shyness between them; for your Englishman is rather reserved, and your Yankee, he does not fancy that sort of thing in anybody but himself. Besides, the English whalers sometimes affect a kind of metropolitan superiority over the American whalers; regarding the long, lean Nantucketer, with his nondescript provincialisms, as a sort of sea-peasant. But where this superiority in the English whalemen does really consist, it would be hard to say, seeing that the Yankees in one day, collectively, kill more whales than all the English, collectively, in ten years. But this is a harmless little foible in the English whale-hunters, which the Nantucketer does not take much to heart; probably, because he knows that he has a few foibles himself.

So, then, we see that of all ships separately sailing the sea, the whalers have most reason to be sociable—and they are so. Whereas, some merchant ships crossing each other's wake in the mid-Atlantic, will oftentimes pass on without so much as a single word of recognition, mutually cutting each other on the high seas, like a brace of dandies in Broadway;[3] and all the time indulging, perhaps, in finical criticism upon each other's rig. As for Men-of-War, when they chance to meet at sea, they first go through such a string of silly bowings and scrapings, such a ducking of ensigns, that there does not seem to be much right-down hearty good-will and brotherly love about it at all. As touching Slave-ships meeting, why, they are in such a prodigious hurry, they run away from each other as soon as possible. And as for Pirates, when they chance to cross each other's cross-bones, the first hail is—"How many skulls?"—the same way that whalers hail—"How many barrels?" And that question once answered, pirates straightway steer apart, for they are infernal villains on both sides, and don't like to see overmuch of each other's villanous likenesses.

But look at the godly, honest, unostentatious, hospitable, sociable, free-and-easy whaler! What does the whaler do when she meets another whaler in any sort of decent weather? She has a "*Gam*," a thing so utterly unknown to all other ships that they never heard of the name even; and if by chance they should hear of it, they only grin at it, and repeat gamesome stuff about "spouters" and "blubber-boilers," and such like pretty exclamations. Why it is that all Merchant-seamen, and also all Pirates and Man-of-War's men, and Slave-ship sailors, cherish such a scornful feeling towards Whale-ships; this is a question it would be hard to answer. Because, in the case of pirates, say, I should like to know whether that profession of theirs has any peculiar glory about it. It sometimes ends in uncommon elevation, indeed; but only at the gallows. And besides, when a man is elevated in that odd fashion, he has no proper foundation for his superior altitude. Hence, I conclude, that in boasting himself to be high lifted above a whaleman, in that assertion the pirate has no solid basis to stand on.

But what is a *Gam?* You might wear out your index-finger running up and down the columns of dictionaries, and never find the word. Dr. Johnson

3. The main commercial street in New York City and the start of the major road leading north through Manhattan Island.

never attained to that erudition; Noah Webster's ark[4] does not hold it. Nevertheless, this same expressive word has now for many years been in constant use among some fifteen thousand true born Yankees. Certainly, it needs a definition, and should be incorporated into the Lexicon. With that view, let me learnedly define it.

GAM.[5] Noun—*A social meeting of two (or more) Whale-ships, generally on a cruising-ground; when, after exchanging hails, they exchange visits by boats' crews: the two captains remaining, for the time, on board of one ship, and the two chief mates on the other.*

There is another little item about Gamming which must not be forgotten here. All professions have their own little peculiarities of detail; so has the whale fishery. In a pirate, man-of-war, or slave ship, when the captain is rowed anywhere in his boat, he always sits in the stern sheets on a comfortable, sometimes cushioned seat there, and often steers himself with a pretty little milliner's tiller decorated with gay cords and ribbons.[6] But the whale-boat has no seat astern, no sofa of that sort whatever, and no tiller at all. High times indeed, if whaling captains were wheeled about the water on castors like gouty old aldermen in patent chairs. And as for a tiller, the whale-boat never admits of any such effeminacy; and therefore as in gamming a complete boat's crew must leave the ship, and hence as the boat steerer or harpooneer is of the number, that subordinate is the steersman upon the occasion, and the captain, having no place to sit in, is pulled off to his visit all standing like a pine tree. And often you will notice that being conscious of the eyes of the whole visible world resting on him from the sides of the two ships, this standing captain is all alive to the importance of sustaining his dignity by maintaining his legs. Nor is this any very easy matter; for in his rear is the immense projecting steering oar hitting him now and then in the small of his back, the after-oar reciprocating by rapping his knees in front. He is thus completely wedged before and behind, and can only expand himself sideways by settling down on his stretched legs; but a sudden, violent pitch of the boat will often go far to topple him, because length of foundation is nothing without corresponding breadth. Merely make a spread angle of two poles, and you cannot stand them up. Then, again, it would never do in plain sight of the world's riveted eyes, it would never do, I say, for this straddling captain to be seen steadying himself the slightest particle by catching hold of anything with his hands; indeed, as token of his entire, buoyant self-command, he generally carries his hands in his trowsers' pockets; but perhaps being generally very large, heavy hands, he carries them there for ballast.[7] Nevertheless there have occurred instances, well authenticated ones too, where the captain has been known for an uncommonly critical moment or two, in a sudden squall say—to seize hold of the nearest oarsman's hair, and hold on there like grim death.

4. The learned Englishman Samuel Johnson (1709–1784) compiled a respected dictionary of the English language in 1755. The learned American Noah Webster (1758–1843) compiled the 1806 dictionary of the English language in the United States, punningly called "Noah's Ark."
5. Mansfield and Vincent (p. 739) show that Melville was rewriting the definition of *gam* from Cheever's *The Whale and His Captors* (1850). Most of the encounters the *Pequod* has with other ships do not fit this stringent definition.
6. I.e., a pretty little tiller decorated like a lady's hat (made by a professional hatmaker, or milliner). By contrast, the whaleboat is steered by an immense oar.
7. Ships carried heavy weights in the hold to keep balanced, such as bricks from Holland used for building houses Melville knew in New York City and Albany.

CHAPTER 54

THE TOWN-HO'S STORY[1]

(As told at the Golden Inn.)

The Cape of Good Hope, and all the watery region round about there, is much like some noted four corners of a great highway, where you meet more travellers than in any other part.

It was not very long after speaking[2] the Goney that another homeward-bound whaleman, the Town-Ho,[3] was encountered. She was manned almost wholly by Polynesians. In the short gam that ensued she gave us strong news of Moby Dick. To some the general interest in the White Whale was now wildly heightened by a circumstance of the Town-Ho's story, which seemed obscurely to involve with the whale a certain wondrous, inverted visitation of one of those so called judgments of God which at times are said to overtake some men. This latter circumstance, with its own particular accompaniments, forming what may be called the secret part of the tragedy about to be narrated, never reached the ears of Captain Ahab or his mates. For that secret part of the story was unknown to the captain of the Town-Ho himself. It was the private property of three confederate white seamen of that ship, one of whom, it seems, communicated it to Tashtego with Romish injunctions of secresy,[4] but the following night Tashtego rambled in his sleep, and revealed so much of it in that way, that when he was wakened he could not well withhold the rest. Nevertheless, so potent an influence did this thing have on those seamen in the Pequod who came to the full knowledge of it, and by such a strange delicacy, to call it so, were they governed in this matter, that they kept the secret among themselves so that it never transpired abaft the Pequod's main-mast. Interweaving in its proper place this darker thread with the story as publicly narrated on the ship, the whole of this strange affair I now proceed to put on lasting record.

For my humor's sake, I shall preserve the style in which I once narrated it at Lima, to a lounging circle of my Spanish friends, one saint's eve, smoking upon the thick-gilt tiled piazza of the Golden Inn. Of those fine cavaliers, the young Dons, Pedro and Sebastian, were on the closer terms

1. This chapter first appeared in *Harper's New Monthly Magazine* for October 1851, six weeks in advance of the book's publication in mid-November. Works such as Cervantes's *Don Quixote* (1605, 1615) and Henry Fielding's *Tom Jones* (1749) provided precedents for the "interpolation" of long stories into the main story; the device allows Melville to show Ishmael interacting ashore in a sophisticated company and to introduce the white whale in action without weakening the climax of Ahab's pursuit. Ishmael, the narrator of a story almost too strange to believe, claims the right to tell a basic story more than one way (here, as he told it in specific circumstances, at the Golden Inn in Lima) and (when challenged) to swear that it is in "substance and great items true," not necessarily true in every detail.
2. Communicating with (as distinguished from "gamming" with).
3. The ancient whale-cry upon first sighting a whale from the mast-head, still used by whalemen in hunting the famous Gallipagos terrapin. [Melville's note.] The Galapagos Islands lie off the west coast of Ecuador; Melville had touched there in 1841 and 1842 and wrote of them in his "The Encantadas" (1854–55).
4. Ishmael's freedom as narrator is enhanced by his depiction, elsewhere, of Tashtego's limited command of English and the presumed difficulty he might have had in comprehending the Roman Catholic (and Spanish-speaking?) sailors of the *Town-Ho*. The true story, Ishmael asserts, was known below decks on both ships but never known to the captain of the *Town-Ho* or to Captain Ahab and his mates.

with me; and hence the interluding questions they occasionally put, and which are duly answered at the time.

"Some two years prior to my first learning the events which I am about rehearsing to you, gentlemen, the Town-Ho, Sperm Whaler of Nantucket, was cruising in your Pacific here, not very many days' sail westward from the eaves of this good Golden Inn. She was somewhere to the northward of the Line. One morning upon handling the pumps, according to daily usage, it was observed that she made more water in her hold than common. They supposed a sword-fish had stabbed her, gentlemen.[5] But the captain, having some unusual reason for believing that rare good luck awaited him in those latitudes; and therefore being very averse to quit them, and the leak not being then considered at all dangerous, though, indeed, they could not find it after searching the hold as low down as was possible in rather heavy weather, the ship still continued her cruisings, the mariners working at the pumps at wide and easy intervals; but no good luck came; more days went by, and not only was the leak yet undiscovered, but it sensibly increased. So much so, that now taking some alarm, the captain, making all sail, stood away for the nearest harbor among the islands, there to have his hull hove out and repaired.

"Though no small passage was before her, yet, if the commonest chance favored, he did not at all fear that his ship would founder by the way, because his pumps were of the best, and being periodically relieved at them, those six-and-thirty men of his could easily keep the ship free; never mind if the leak should double on her. In truth, well nigh the whole of this passage being attended by very prosperous breezes, the Town-Ho had all but certainly arrived in perfect safety at her port without the occurrence of the least fatality, had it not been for the brutal overbearing of Radney, the mate, a Nantucketer, and the bitterly provoked vengeance of Steelkilt, a Lakeman[6] and desperado from Buffalo."

"Lakeman!—Buffalo! Pray, what is a Lakeman, and where is Buffalo?" said Don Sebastian, rising in his swinging mat of grass.

"On the eastern shore of our Lake Erie, Don; but—I crave your courtesy—may be, you shall soon hear further of all that. Now, gentlemen, in square-sail brigs and three-masted ships, well nigh as large and stout as any that ever sailed out of your old Callao to far Manilla; this Lakeman, in the land-locked heart of our America, had yet been nurtured by all those agrarian freebooting[7] impressions popularly connected with the open ocean. For in their interflowing aggregate, those grand fresh-water seas of ours,—Erie, and Ontario, and Huron, and Superior, and Michigan,—possess an ocean-like expansiveness, with many of the ocean's noblest traits; with many of its rimmed varieties of races and of climes. They contain round archipelagoes of romantic isles, even as the Polynesian

5. Ishmael's words sound like (and are meant to sound like) tall talk, but a standard strategy in such humor is to unsettle the audience by inducing disbelief in the unlikely (but true) so as later to induce belief in another extravagance that may or may not be true. In fact, swordfish sometimes stabbed ships, as Melville knew from a well-publicized example while he was in Liverpool in 1839 and from a story current when he was in Hawaii in 1843. Ishmael uses the formal term "gentlemen" for ironic effect because it distances his audience at the Golden Inn from the wild events of his story.
6. A sailor on the Great Lakes. Later references consistently identify Radney as a Nantucketer, so the 1851 reading Vineyarder is emended here.
7. Not a reference to some activist "agrarian" movement, but merely piratical behavior anomalous when occurring among landsmen (or canalmen or lakemen). Compare the condensed construction, "clerical peculiarities," in Ch. 8.

waters do; in large part, are shored by two great contrasting nations, as the Atlantic is; they furnish long maritime approaches to our numerous territorial colonies from the East, dotted all round their banks; here and there are frowned upon by batteries, and by the goat-like craggy guns of lofty Mackinaw;[8] they have heard the fleet thunderings of naval victories; at intervals, they yield their beaches to wild barbarians, whose red painted faces flash from out their peltry wigwams; for leagues and leagues are flanked by ancient and unentered forests, where the gaunt pines stand like serried lines of kings in Gothic genealogies; those same woods harboring wild Afric beasts of prey, and silken creatures whose exported furs give robes to Tartar Emperors; they mirror the paved capitals of Buffalo and Cleveland, as well as Winnebago[9] villages; they float alike the full-rigged merchant ship, the armed cruiser of the State, the steamer, and the birch canoe; they are swept by Borean[1] and dismasting blasts as direful as any that lash the salted wave; they know what shipwrecks are, for out of sight of land, however inland, they have drowned full many a midnight ship with all its shrieking crew.

"Thus, gentlemen, though an inlander, Steelkilt was wild-ocean born, and wild-ocean nurtured; as much of an audacious mariner as any. And for Radney, though in his infancy he may have laid him down on the lone Nantucket beach, to nurse at his maternal sea; though in after life he had long followed our austere Atlantic and your contemplative Pacific; yet was he quite as vengeful and full of social quarrel as the backwoods seaman, fresh from the latitudes of buck-horn handled Bowie-knives.[2] Yet was this Nantucketer a man with some good-hearted traits; and this Lakeman, a mariner, who though a sort of devil indeed, might yet by inflexible firmness, only tempered by that common decency of human recognition which is the meanest slave's right; thus treated, this Steelkilt had long been retained harmless and docile. At all events, he had proved so thus far; but Radney was doomed and made mad, and Steelkilt—but, gentlemen, you shall hear.

"It was not more than a day or two at the furthest after pointing her prow for her island haven, that the Town-Ho's leak seemed again increasing, but only so as to require an hour or more at the pumps every day. You must know that in a settled and civilized ocean like our Atlantic, for example, some skippers think little of pumping their whole way across it; though of a still, sleepy night, should the officer of the deck happen to forget his duty in that respect, the probability would be that he and his shipmates would never again remember it, on account of all hands gently subsiding to the bottom. Nor in the solitary and savage seas far from you to the westward, gentlemen, is it altogether unusual for ships to keep clanging at their pump-handles in full chorus even for a voyage of considerable length; that is, if it lie along a tolerably accessible coast, or if any other

8. The fort on Mackinac Island in the strait between Lake Huron and Lake Michigan. The chief naval victory there was Oliver H. Perry's over the British fleet in Lake Erie in 1813. This was recent matter for national and even personal pride, for Melville's own mother had met the heroic Perry at the victory celebration for him in Albany later in 1813. On his trip to then pioneer Illinois in 1840 (when Chicago was only a few years old), Melville went over the Erie Canal then sailed past Mackinac; he vividly remembered Indian faces looking out from wigwams made of animal pelts ("pelty").
9. Indians inhabiting Wisconsin. "Tartar Emperors": loosely, Asiatic rulers during medieval times.
1. Winds from the north (from Boreas, the Greek god of that wind).
2. Single-edged hunting knives favored in Melville's youth by pioneer and Texas Revolution hero James Bowie, commonly carried by frontiersmen and freely used in personal combat. In Arkansas (according to popular opinion), used as toothpicks (see p. 148, n. 1).

reasonable retreat is afforded them. It is only when a leaky vessel is in some very out of the way part of those waters, some really landless latitude, that her captain begins to feel a little anxious.

"Much this way had it been with the Town-Ho; so when her leak was found gaining once more, there was in truth some small concern manifested by several of her company; especially by Radney the mate. He commanded the upper sails to be well hoisted, sheeted home anew, and every way expanded to the breeze. Now this Radney, I suppose, was as little of a coward, and as little inclined to any sort of nervous apprehensiveness touching his own person as any fearless, unthinking creature on land or on sea that you can conveniently imagine, gentlemen. Therefore when he betrayed this solicitude about the safety of the ship, some of the seamen declared that it was only on account of his being a part owner in her. So when they were working that evening at the pumps, there was on this head no small gamesomeness slily going on among them, as they stood with their feet continually overflowed by the rippling clear water; clear as any mountain spring, gentlemen—that bubbling from the pumps ran across the deck, and poured itself out in steady spouts at the lee scupper-holes.[3]

"Now, as you well know, it is not seldom the case in this conventional world of ours[4]—watery or otherwise; that when a person placed in command over his fellow-men finds one of them to be very significantly his superior in general pride of manhood, straightway against that man he conceives an unconquerable dislike and bitterness; and if he have a chance he will pull down and pulverize that subaltern's tower, and make a little heap of dust of it. Be this conceit of mine as it may, gentlemen, at all events Steelkilt was a tall and noble animal with a head like a Roman, and a flowing golden beard like the tasseled housings of your last viceroy's snorting charger; and a brain, and a heart, and a soul in him, gentlemen, which had made Steelkilt Charlemagne,[5] had he been born son to Charlemagne's father. But Radney, the mate, was ugly as a mule; yet as hardy, as stubborn, as malicious. He did not love Steelkilt, and Steelkilt knew it.

"Espying the mate drawing near as he was toiling at the pump with the rest, the Lakeman affected not to notice him, but unawed, went on with his gay banterings.

"'Aye, aye, my merry lads, it's a lively leak this; hold a cannikin, one of ye, and let's have a taste. By the Lord, it's worth bottling! I tell ye what, men, old Rad's investment must go for it! he had best cut away his part of the hull and tow it home. The fact is, boys, that sword-fish only began the job; he's come back again with a gang of ship-carpenters, saw-fish, and file-fish, and what not; and the whole posse of 'em are now hard at work cutting and slashing at the bottom; making improvements, I suppose. If old Rad were here now, I'd tell him to jump overboard and scatter 'em. They're playing the devil with his estate, I can tell him. But he's a simple old soul,—Rad, and a beauty too. Boys, they say the rest of his property is invested in looking-glasses. I wonder if he'd give a poor devil like me the model of his nose.'

3. Gutter drainholes on the off-wind side ("lee"), toward which the deck is leaning.
4. One ruled by social conventions rather than recognition of individual worth. A biblical precedent is Saul's jealousy of the young David (as in 1 Samuel 18). *Billy Budd*, the story Melville was still working on when he died in 1891, takes up much the same theme.
5. Celebrated medieval king and emperor (742–814), great warrior and administrator.

"'Damn your eyes! what's that pump stopping for?' roared Radney, pretending not to have heard the sailor's talk. 'Thunder away at it!'

"'Aye, aye, sir,' said Steelkilt, merry as a cricket. 'Lively, boys, lively, now!' And with that the pump clanged like fifty fire-engines; the men tossed their hats off to it, and ere long that peculiar gasping of the lungs was heard which denotes the fullest tension of life's utmost energies.

"Quitting the pump at last, with the rest of his band, the Lakeman went forward all panting, and sat himself down on the windlass; his face fiery red, his eyes bloodshot, and wiping the profuse sweat from his brow. Now what cozening fiend it was, gentlemen, that possessed Radney to meddle with such a man in that corporeally exasperated state, I know not; but so it happened. Intolerably striding along the deck, the mate commanded him to get a broom and sweep down the planks, and also a shovel, and remove some offensive matters consequent upon allowing a pig to run at large.

"Now, gentlemen, sweeping a ship's deck at sea is a piece of household work which in all times but raging gales is regularly attended to every evening; it has been known to be done in the case of ships actually foundering at the time. Such, gentlemen, is the inflexibility of sea-usages and the instinctive love of neatness in seamen; some of whom would not willingly drown without first washing their faces. But in all vessels this broom business is the prescriptive province of the boys,[6] if boys there be aboard. Besides, it was the stronger men in the Town-Ho that had been divided into gangs, taking turns at the pumps; and being the most athletic seaman of them all, Steelkilt had been regularly assigned captain of one of the gangs; consequently he should have been freed from any trivial business not connected with truly nautical duties, such being the case with his comrades. I mention all these particulars so that you may understand exactly how this affair stood between the two men.

"But there was more than this: the order about the shovel was almost as plainly meant to sting and insult Steelkilt, as though Radney had spat in his face. Any man who has gone sailor in a whale-ship will understand this; and all this and doubtless much more, the Lakeman fully comprehended when the mate uttered his command. But as he sat still for a moment, and as he steadfastly looked into the mate's malignant eye and perceived the stacks of powder-casks heaped up in him and the slow-match silently burning along towards them; as he instinctively saw all this, that strange forbearance and unwillingness to stir up the deeper passionateness in any already ireful being—a repugnance most felt, when felt at all, by really valiant men even when aggrieved—this nameless phantom feeling, gentlemen, stole over Steelkilt.

"Therefore, in his ordinary tone, only a little broken by the bodily exhaustion he was temporarily in, he answered him saying that sweeping the deck was not his business, and he would not do it. And then, without at all alluding to the shovel, he pointed to three lads as the customary sweepers; who, not being billeted at the pumps, had done little or nothing all day. To this, Radney replied with an oath, in a most domineering and outrageous manner unconditionally reiterating his command; meanwhile advancing upon the still seated Lakeman, with an uplifted cooper's club hammer[7] which he had snatched from a cask near by.

6. Here, literally boys, not green hands who happen to be grown men.
7. Barrel maker's double-headed steel tool.

"Heated and irritated as he was by his spasmodic toil at the pumps, for all his first nameless feeling of forbearance the sweating Steelkilt could but ill brook this bearing in the mate; but somehow still smothering the conflagration within him, without speaking he remained doggedly rooted to his seat, till at last the incensed Radney shook the hammer within a few inches of his face, furiously commanding him to do his bidding.

"Steelkilt rose, and slowly retreating round the windlass, steadily followed by the mate with his menacing hammer, deliberately repeated his intention not to obey. Seeing, however, that his forbearance had not the slightest effect, by an awful and unspeakable intimation with his twisted hand he warned off the foolish and infatuated man; but it was to no purpose. And in this way the two went once slowly round the windlass; when, resolved at last no longer to retreat, bethinking him that he had now forborne as much as comported with his humor, the Lakeman paused on the hatches and thus spoke to the officer:

"'Mr. Radney, I will not obey you. Take that hammer away, or look to yourself.' But the predestinated mate coming still closer to him, where the Lakeman stood fixed, now shook the heavy hammer within an inch of his teeth; meanwhile repeating a string of insufferable maledictions. Retreating not the thousandth part of an inch; stabbing him in the eye with the unflinching poniard of his glance, Steelkilt, clenching his right hand behind him and creepingly drawing it back, told his persecutor that if the hammer but grazed his cheek he (Steelkilt) would murder him. But, gentlemen, the fool had been branded for the slaughter by the gods. Immediately the hammer touched the cheek; the next instant the lower jaw of the mate was stove in his head; he fell on the hatch spouting blood like a whale.

"Ere the cry could go aft Steelkilt was shaking one of the backstays leading far aloft to where two of his comrades were standing their mast-heads. They were both Canallers."

"Canallers!" cried Don Pedro. "We have seen many whale-ships in our harbors, but never heard of your Canallers. Pardon: who and what are they?"

"Canallers, Don, are the boatmen belonging to our grand Erie Canal. You must have heard of it."

"Nay, Senor; hereabouts in this dull, warm, most lazy, and hereditary land, we know but little of your vigorous North."

"Aye? Well then, Don, refill my cup. Your chicha's[8] very fine; and ere proceeding further I will tell ye what our Canallers are; for such information may throw side-light upon my story.

"For three hundred and sixty miles, gentlemen, through the entire breadth of the state of New York; through numerous populous cities and most thriving villages; through long, dismal, uninhabited swamps, and affluent, cultivated fields, unrivalled for fertility; by billiard-room and bar-room; through the holy-of-holies of great forests; on Roman arches over Indian rivers; through sun and shade; by happy hearts or broken; through all the wide contrasting scenery of those noble Mohawk counties;[9] and especially, by rows of snow-white chapels, whose spires stand almost like

8. South American beer made from fermented Indian corn or sugar cane.
9. In mid-New York, originally the territory of Mohawk Indians.

milestones, flows one continual stream of Venetianly corrupt and often lawless life. There's your true Ashantee,[1] gentlemen; there howl your pagans; where you ever find them, next door to you; under the long-flung shadow, and the snug patronizing lee of churches. For by some curious fatality, as it is often noted of your metropolitan freebooters that they ever encamp around the halls of justice, so sinners, gentlemen, most abound in holiest vicinities."

"Is that a friar passing?" said Don Pedro, looking downwards into the crowded plaza, with humorous concern.

"Well for our northern friend, Dame Isabella's Inquisition[2] wanes in Lima," laughed Don Sebastian. "Proceed, Senor."

"A moment! Pardon!" cried another of the company. "In the name of all us Limeese, I but desire to express to you, sir sailor, that we have by no means overlooked your delicacy in not substituting present Lima for distant Venice in your corrupt comparison. Oh! do not bow and look surprised; you know the proverb all along this coast—'Corrupt as Lima.' It but bears out your saying, too; churches more plentiful than billiard-tables, and for ever open—and 'Corrupt as Lima.' So, too, Venice;[3] I have been there; the holy city of the blessed evangelist, St. Mark!—St. Dominic,[4] purge it! Your cup! Thanks: here I refill; now, you pour out again."

"Freely depicted in his own vocation, gentlemen, the Canaller would make a fine dramatic hero, so abundantly and picturesquely wicked is he. Like Mark Antony,[5] for days and days along his green-turfed, flowery Nile, he indolently floats, openly toying with his red-cheeked Cleopatra, ripening his apricot thigh upon the sunny deck. But ashore, all this effeminacy is dashed. The brigandish guise which the Canaller so proudly sports; his slouched and gaily-ribboned hat betoken his grand features. A terror to the smiling innocence of the villages through which he floats; his swart visage and bold swagger are not unshunned in cities. Once a vagabond on his own canal, I have received good turns from one of these Canallers;[6] I thank him heartily; would fain be not ungrateful; but it is often one of the prime redeeming qualities of your man of violence, that at times he has as stiff an arm to back a poor stranger in a strait, as to plunder a wealthy one. In sum, gentlemen, what the wildness of this canal life is, is emphatically evinced by this; that our wild whale-fishery contains so many of its most finished graduates, and that scarce any race of mankind, except Sydney[7] men, are so much distrusted by our whaling captains. Nor does it at all diminish the curiousness of this matter, that to many thousands

1. African (in what is now Ghana).
2. The Spanish Inquisition, set up in 1478 by King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella, questioned, tortured, and even burned suspected heretics. There is private significance: persecuted by reviewers from American Protestant sects, Melville saw himself as suffering at the hands of a speech-suppressing modern American Inquisition; he even thought of dedicating *The Confidence-Man* (1857) to victims of auto-da-fé, the ceremony in which heretics were burned alive.
3. Lima, which Melville had seen, and Venice, which he had not yet seen but knew from *Othello*, were associated in his mind as cities of supersubtle personal psychology, sexual deception, dangerous pushing of religious limits, and haunting, decaying architectural beauty.
4. Founder (1215) of the order of Dominican priests and patron saint of the Cathedral of Lima. Mark, author of the second gospel, is the patron saint of Venice.
5. Not the crowd mover of *Julius Caesar* but the older hero, visualized as disporting himself with the Egyptian queen on the deck of her golden "barge" (*Antony and Cleopatra* 2.2).
6. Possibly true of Melville in 1840.
7. Australian seaport first settled (1788) by convicts freed from prison and exiled to this "penal colony," hence this residual distrust.

of our rural boys and young men born along its line, the probationary life of the Grand Canal[8] furnishes the sole transition between quietly reaping in a Christian corn-field, and recklessly ploughing the waters of the most barbaric seas."

"I see! I see!" impetuously exclaimed Don Pedro, spilling his chicha upon his silvery ruffles. "No need to travel! The world's one Lima. I had thought, now, that at your temperate North the generations were cold and holy as the hills.—But the story."

"I left off, gentlemen, where the Lakeman shook the backstay. Hardly had he done so, when he was surrounded by the three junior mates and the four harpooneers, who all crowded him to the deck. But sliding down the ropes like baleful comets, the two Canallers rushed into the uproar, and sought to drag their man out of it towards the forecastle. Others of the sailors joined with them in this attempt, and a twisted turmoil ensued; while standing out of harm's way, the valiant captain danced up and down with a whale-pike, calling upon his officers to manhandle that atrocious scoundrel, and smoke[9] him along to the quarterdeck. At intervals, he ran close up to the revolving border of the confusion, and prying into the heart of it with his pike, sought to prick out the object of his resentment. But Steelkilt and his desperadoes were too much for them all; they succeeded in gaining the forecastle deck, where, hastily slewing about three or four large casks in a line with the windlass, these sea-Parisians[1] entrenched themselves behind the barricade."

"'Come out of that, ye pirates!' roared the captain, now menacing them with a pistol in each hand, just brought to him by the steward. 'Come out of that, ye cut-throats!'

"Steelkilt leaped on the barricade, and striding up and down there, defied the worst the pistols could do; but gave the captain to understand distinctly, that his (Steelkilt's) death would be the signal for a murderous mutiny on the part of all hands. Fearing in his heart lest this might prove but too true, the captain a little desisted, but still commanded the insurgents instantly to return to their duty.

"'Will you promise not to touch us, if we do?' demanded their ringleader.

"'Turn to! turn to!—I make no promise;—to your duty! Do you want to sink the ship, by knocking off at a time like this?. Turn to!' and he once more raised a pistol.

"'Sink the ship?' cried Steelkilt. 'Aye, let her sink. Not a man of us turns to, unless you swear not to raise a rope-yarn against us. What say ye, men?' turning to his comrades. A fierce cheer was their response.

"The Lakeman now patrolled the barricade, all the while keeping his eye on the Captain, and jerking out such sentences as these:—'It's not our fault; we didn't want it; I told him to take his hammer away; it was boys' business; he might have known me before this; I told him not to prick the buffalo; I believe I have broken a finger here against his cursed jaw; ain't those mincing knives[2] down in the forecastle there, men? look to those

8. Epithet for the Erie Canal, from the great central canal of Venice.
9. Push or drag (so fast that he travels like smoke along a floor).
1. Rioting revolutionaries, like those in late-18th and mid-19th-century Paris. Melville saw Paris the year after the Revolution of 1848.
2. Sharp two-handled knives for slicing blubber.

handspikes, my hearties. Captain, by God, look to yourself; say the word; don't be a fool; forget it all; we are ready to turn to; treat us decently, and we're your men; but we won't be flogged.'

"'Turn to! I make no promises, turn to, I say!'

"'Look ye, now,' cried the Lakeman, flinging out his arm towards him, 'there are a few of us here (and I am one of them) who have shipped for the cruise,[3] d'ye see; now as you well know, sir, we can claim our discharge as soon as the anchor is down; so we don't want a row; it's not our interest; we want to be peaceable; we are ready to work, but we won't be flogged.'

"'Turn to!' roared the Captain.

"Steelkilt glanced round him a moment, and then said:—'I tell you what it is now, Captain, rather than kill ye, and be hung for such a shabby rascal, we won't lift a hand against ye unless ye attack us; but till you say the word about not flogging us, we don't do a hand's turn.'

"'Down into the forecastle then, down with ye, I'll keep ye there till ye're sick of it. Down ye go.'

"'Shall we?' cried the ringleader to his men. Most of them were against it; but at length, in obedience to Steelkilt, they preceded him down into their dark den, growlingly disappearing, like bears into a cave.

"As the Lakeman's bare head was just level with the planks, the Captain and his posse leaped the barricade, and rapidly drawing over the slide of the scuttle, planted their group of hands upon it, and loudly called for the steward to bring the heavy brass padlock belonging to the companionway.[4] Then opening the slide a little, the Captain whispered something down the crack, closed it, and turned the key upon them—ten in number—leaving on deck some twenty or more, who thus far had remained neutral.

"All night a wide-awake watch was kept by all the officers, forward and aft, especially about the forecastle scuttle and fore hatchway;[5] at which last place it was feared the insurgents might emerge, after breaking through the bulkhead below. But the hours of darkness passed in peace; the men who still remained at their duty toiling hard at the pumps, whose clinking and clanking at intervals through the dreary night dismally resounded through the ship.

"At sunrise the Captain went forward, and knocking on the deck, summoned the prisoners to work; but with a yell they refused. Water was then lowered down to them, and a couple of handfuls of biscuit were tossed after it; when again turning the key upon them and pocketing it, the Captain returned to the quarter-deck. Twice every day for three days this was repeated; but on the fourth morning a confused wrangling, and then a scuffling was heard, as the customary summons was delivered; and suddenly four men burst up from the forecastle, saying they were ready to turn to. The fetid closeness of the air, and a famishing diet, united perhaps to some fears of ultimate retribution, had constrained them to surrender at discretion. Emboldened by this, the Captain reiterated his demand to the rest, but Steelkilt shouted up to him a terrific hint to stop his babbling

3. Enlisted for service only until the ship anchors at the next port (not until her return to her home port).
4. The stairs to the officers' cabin.
5. Doorway into a belowdecks storage space. "Forecastle scuttle": the deck opening to a ladder down into the crew's quarters.

and betake himself where he belonged. On the fifth morning three others of the mutineers bolted up into the air from the desperate arms below that sought to restrain them. Only three were left.

"'Better turn to, now?' said the Captain with a heartless jeer.

"'Shut us up again, will ye!' cried Steelkilt.

"'Oh! certainly,' said the Captain, and the key clicked.

"It was at this point, gentlemen, that enraged by the defection of seven of his former associates, and stung by the mocking voice that had last hailed him, and maddened by his long entombment in a place as black as the bowels of despair;[6] it was then that Steelkilt proposed to the two Canallers, thus far apparently of one mind with him, to burst out of their hole at the next summoning of the garrison; and armed with their keen mincing knives (long, crescentic, heavy implements with a handle at each end) run a muck from the bowsprit to the taffrail; and if by any devilishness of desperation possible, seize the ship. For himself, he would do this, he said, whether they joined him or not. That was the last night he should spend in that den. But the scheme met with no opposition on the part of the other two; they swore they were ready for that, or for any other mad thing, for anything in short but a surrender. And what was more, they each insisted upon being the first man on deck, when the time to make the rush should come. But to this their leader as fiercely objected, reserving that priority for himself; particularly as his two comrades would not yield, the one to the other, in the matter; and both of them could not be first, for the ladder would but admit one man at a time. And here, gentlemen, the foul play of these miscreants must come out.

"Upon hearing the frantic project of their leader, each in his own separate soul had suddenly lighted, it would seem, upon the same piece of treachery, namely: to be foremost in breaking out, in order to be the first of the three, though the last of the ten, to surrender; and thereby secure whatever small chance of pardon such conduct might merit. But when Steelkilt made known his determination still to lead them to the last, they in some way, by some subtle chemistry of villany, mixed their before secret treacheries together; and when their leader fell into a doze, verbally opened their souls to each other in three sentences; and bound the sleeper with cords, and gagged him with cords; and shrieked out for the Captain at midnight.

"Thinking murder at hand, and smelling in the dark for the blood, he and all his armed mates and harpooneers rushed for the forecastle. In a few minutes the scuttle was opened, and, bound hand and foot, the still struggling ringleader was shoved up into the air by his perfidious allies, who at once claimed the honor of securing a man who had been fully ripe for murder. But all three were collared, and dragged along the deck like dead cattle; and, side by side, were seized up[7] into the mizen rigging, like three quarters of meat, and there they hung till morning. 'Damn ye,' cried the Captain, pacing to and fro before them, 'the vultures would not touch ye, ye villains!'

"At sunrise he summoned all hands; and separating those who had rebelled from those who had taken no part in the mutiny, he told the former that he had a good mind to flog them all round—thought, upon the whole, he would do so—he ought to—justice demanded it; but for the

6. Quasi-biblical phraseology, as in the hymn in Ch. 9.
7. Lashed up, tied up.

present, considering their timely surrender, he would let them go with a reprimand, which he accordingly administered in the vernacular.

"'But as for you, ye carrion rogues,' turning to the three men in the rigging—'for you, I mean to mince ye up for the try-pots;'[8] and, seizing a rope, he applied it with all his might to the backs of the two traitors, till they yelled no more, but lifelessly hung their heads sideways, as the two crucified thieves are drawn.[9]

"'My wrist is sprained with ye!' he cried, at last; 'but there is still rope enough left for you, my fine bantam,[1] that wouldn't give up. Take that gag from his mouth, and let us hear what he can say for himself.'

"For a moment the exhausted mutineer made a tremulous motion of his cramped jaws, and then painfully twisting round his head, said in a sort of hiss, 'What I say is this—and mind it well—if you flog me, I murder you!'

"'Say ye so? then see how ye frighten me'—and the Captain drew off with the rope to strike.

"'Best not,' hissed the Lakeman.

"'But I must,'—and the rope was once more drawn back for the stroke.

"Steelkilt here hissed out something, inaudible to all but the Captain; who, to the amazement of all hands, started back, paced the deck rapidly two or three times, and then suddenly throwing down his rope, said, 'I won't do it—let him go—cut him down: d'ye hear?'

"But as the junior mates were hurrying to execute the order, a pale man, with a bandaged head, arrested them—Radney the chief mate. Ever since the blow, he had lain in his berth; but that morning, hearing the tumult on the deck, he had crept out, and thus far had watched the whole scene. Such was the state of his mouth, that he could hardly speak; but mumbling something about *his* being willing and able to do what the captain dared not attempt, he snatched the rope and advanced to his pinioned foe.

"'You are a coward!' hissed the Lakeman.

"'So I am, but take that.' The mate was in the very act of striking, when another hiss stayed his uplifted arm. He paused: and then pausing no more, made good his word, spite of Steelkilt's threat, whatever that might have been. The three men were then cut down, all hands were turned to, and, sullenly worked by the moody seamen, the iron pumps clanged as before.

"Just after dark that day, when one watch had retired below, a clamor was heard in the forecastle; and the two trembling traitors running up, besieged the cabin door, saying they durst not consort with the crew. Entreaties, cuffs, and kicks could not drive them back, so at their own instance they were put down in the ship's run for salvation. Still, no sign of mutiny reappeared among the rest. On the contrary, it seemed, that mainly at Steelkilt's instigation, they had resolved to maintain the strictest peacefulness, obey all orders to the last, and, when the ship reached port, desert her in a body. But in order to insure the speediest end to the voyage, they all agreed to another thing—namely, not to sing out for whales, in case any should be discovered. For, spite of her leak, and spite

8. As Melville explains in Chapter 96, a masonry stove approximately ten by eight feet wide and five feet high, attached to the main deck of a whaler; in great iron pots, blubber is heated and rendered into oil.
9. Matthew 27.38: "Then were there two thieves crucified with him, one on the right hand, and another on the left."
1. Fighting cock of a diminutive breed. Here, an insult, in view of Steelkilt's stature.

of all her other perils, the Town-Ho still maintained her mast-heads, and her captain was just as willing to lower for a fish that moment, as on the day his craft first struck the cruising ground; and Radney the mate was quite as ready to change his berth for a boat, and with his bandaged mouth seek to gag in death the vital jaw of the whale.

"But though the Lakeman had induced the seamen to adopt this sort of passiveness in their conduct, he kept his own counsel (at least till all was over) concerning his own proper and private revenge upon the man who had stung him in the ventricles of his heart. He was in Radney the chief mate's watch; and as if the infatuated man sought to run more than half way to meet his doom, after the scene at the rigging, he insisted, against the express counsel of the captain, upon resuming the head of his watch at night. Upon this, and one or two other circumstances, Steelkilt systematically built the plan of his revenge.

"During the night, Radney had an unseamanlike way of sitting on the bulwarks of the quarter-deck, and leaning his arm upon the gunwale of the boat which was hoisted up there, a little above the ship's side. In this attitude, it was well known, he sometimes dozed. There was a considerable vacancy between the boat and the ship, and down beneath this was the sea. Steelkilt calculated his time, and found that his next trick at the helm would come round at two o'clock, in the morning of the third day from that in which he had been betrayed. At his leisure, he employed the interval in braiding something very carefully in his watches below.

"'What are you making there?' said a shipmate.

"'What do you think? what does it look like?'

"'Like a lanyard[2] for your bag; but it's an odd one, seems to me.'

"'Yes, rather oddish,' said the Lakeman, holding it at arm's length before him; 'but I think it will answer. Shipmate, I haven't enough twine,—have you any?'

"But there was none in the forecastle.

"'Then I must get some from old Rad;' and he rose to go aft.

"'You don't mean to go a begging to *him!*' said a sailor.

"'Why not? Do you think he won't do me a turn, when it's to help himself in the end, shipmate?' and going to the mate, he looked at him quietly, and asked him for some twine to mend his hammock. It was given him—neither twine nor lanyard were seen again; but the next night an iron ball, closely netted, partly rolled from the pocket of the Lakeman's monkey jacket, as he was tucking the coat into his hammock for a pillow. Twenty-four hours after, his trick at the silent helm—nigh to the man who was apt to doze over the grave always ready dug to the seaman's hand—that fatal hour was then to come; and in the fore-ordaining soul of Steelkilt, the mate was already stark and stretched as a corpse, with his forehead crushed in.

"But, gentlemen, a fool saved the would-be murderer from the bloody deed he had planned. Yet complete revenge he had, and without being the avenger. For by a mysterious fatality, Heaven itself seemed to step in to take out of his hands into its own the damning thing he would have done.

"It was just between daybreak and sunrise of the morning of the second day, when they were washing down the decks, that a stupid Teneriffe

2. Drawstring.

man,[3] drawing water in the main-chains, all at once shouted out, 'There she rolls! there she rolls! Jesu! what a whale!' It was Moby Dick."

"Moby Dick!" cried Don Sebastian; "St. Dominic! Sir sailor, but do whales have christenings? Whom call you Moby Dick?"

"A very white, and famous, and most deadly immortal monster, Don;—but that would be too long a story."[4]

"How? how?" cried all the young Spaniards, crowding.

"Nay, Dons, Dons—nay, nay! I cannot rehearse that now. Let me get more into the air, Sirs."

"The chicha! the chicha!" cried Don Pedro; "our vigorous friend looks faint;—fill up his empty glass!"

"No need, gentlemen; one moment, and I proceed.—Now, gentlemen, so suddenly perceiving the snowy whale within fifty yards of the ship—forgetful of the compact among the crew—in the excitement of the moment, the Teneriffe man had instinctively and involuntarily lifted his voice for the monster, though for some little time past it had been plainly beheld from the three sullen mast-heads. All was now a phrensy. 'The White Whale—the White Whale!' was the cry from captain, mates, and harpooneers, who, undeterred by fearful rumors, were all anxious to capture so famous and precious a fish; while the dogged crew eyed askance, and with curses, the appalling beauty of the vast milky mass, that lit up by a horizontal spangling sun, shifted and glistened like a living opal in the blue morning sea. Gentlemen, a strange fatality pervades the whole career of these events, as if verily mapped out before the world itself was charted. The mutineer was the bowsman of the mate,[5] and when fast to a fish, it was his duty to sit next him, while Radney stood up with his lance in the prow, and haul in or slacken the line, at the word of command. Moreover, when the four boats were lowered, the mate's got the start; and none howled more fiercely with delight than did Steelkilt, as he strained at his oar. After a stiff pull, their harpooneer got fast, and, spear in hand, Radney sprang to the bow. He was always a furious man, it seems, in a boat. And now his bandaged cry was, to beach him on the whale's topmost back. Nothing loath, his bowsman hauled him up and up, through a blinding foam that blent two whitenesses together; till of a sudden the boat struck as against a sunken ledge, and keeling over, spilled out the standing mate. That instant, as he fell on the whale's slippery back, the boat righted, and was dashed aside by the swell, while Radney was tossed over into the sea, on the other flank of the whale. He struck out through the spray, and, for an instant, was dimly seen through that veil, wildly seeking to remove himself from the eye of Moby Dick. But the whale rushed round in a sudden maelstrom;[6] seized the swimmer between his jaws; and rearing high up with him, plunged headlong again, and went down.

"Meantime, at the first tap of the boat's bottom, the Lakeman had slackened the line, so as to drop astern from the whirlpool; calmly looking on,

3. Crewman from the largest of the Canary Islands, off Spain.
4. Telling the story would amount to Ishmael's telling the whole story of his cruise on the *Pequod* (the memory of which makes him feel faint, "vigorous" a fellow as he is); it would be too long a story for this one night in Lima but just long enough to satisfy a reader of *Moby-Dick*, in the future.
5. Second oarsman from the bow—where Radney had rushed from the stern to lance and kill the harpooned whale.
6. Whirlpool.

he thought his own thoughts. But a sudden, terrific, downward jerking of the boat, quickly brought his knife to the line. He cut it; and the whale was free. But, at some distance, Moby Dick rose again, with some tatters of Radney's red woollen shirt, caught in the teeth that had destroyed him. All four boats gave chase again; but the whale eluded them, and finally wholly disappeared.

"In good time, the Town-Ho reached her port—a savage, solitary place—where no civilized creature resided. There, headed by the Lakeman, all but five or six of the foremast-men deliberately deserted among the palms; eventually, as it turned out, seizing a large double war-canoe of the savages, and setting sail for some other harbor.

"The ship's company being reduced to but a handful, the captain called upon the Islanders to assist him in the laborious business of heaving down the ship to stop the leak. But to such unresting vigilance over their dangerous allies was this small band of whites necessitated, both by night and by day, and so extreme was the hard work they underwent, that upon the vessel being ready again for sea, they were in such a weakened condition that the captain durst not put off with them in so heavy a vessel. After taking counsel with his officers, he anchored the ship as far off shore as possible; loaded and ran out his two cannon from the bows; stacked his muskets on the poop; and warning the Islanders not to approach the ship at their peril, took one man with him, and setting the sail of his best whaleboat, steered straight before the wind for Tahiti, five hundred miles distant, to procure a reinforcement to his crew.

"On the fourth day of the sail, a large canoe was descried, which seemed to have touched at a low isle of corals. He steered away from it; but the savage craft bore down on him; and soon the voice of Steelkilt hailed him to heave to, or he would run him under water. The captain presented a pistol. With one foot on each prow of the yoked war-canoes, the Lakeman laughed him to scorn; assuring him that if the pistol so much as clicked in the lock, he would bury him in bubbles and foam.

"'What do you want of me?' cried the captain.

"'Where are you bound? and for what are you bound?' demanded Steelkilt; 'no lies.'

"'I am bound to Tahiti for more men.'

"'Very good. Let me board you a moment—I come in peace.' With that he leaped from the canoe, swam to the boat; and climbing the gunwale, stood face to face with the captain.

"'Cross your arms, sir; throw back your head. Now, repeat after me. "As soon as Steelkilt leaves me, I swear to beach this boat on yonder island, and remain there six days. If I do not, may lightnings strike me!"'

"'A pretty scholar,'[7] laughed the Lakeman. 'Adios, Senor!' and leaping into the sea, he swam back to his comrades.

"Watching the boat till it was fairly beached, and drawn up to the roots of the cocoa-nut trees, Steelkilt made sail again, and in due time arrived at Tahiti, his own place of destination. There, luck befriended him; two ships were about to sail for France, and were providentially in want of precisely that number of men which the sailor headed. They embarked; and

7. Like a good schoolboy ("scholar") in that day of rote learning, the captain has repeated the words dictated to him.

so for ever got the start of their former captain, had he been at all minded to work them legal retribution.

"Some ten days after the French ships sailed, the whale-boat arrived, and the captain was forced to enlist some of the more civilized Tahitians, who had been somewhat used to the sea. Chartering a small native schooner, he returned with them to his vessel; and finding all right there, again resumed his cruisings.

"Where Steelkilt now is, gentlemen, none know; but upon the island of Nantucket, the widow of Radney still turns to the sea which refuses to give up its dead; still in dreams sees the awful white whale that destroyed him." * * *[8]

"Are you through?" said Don Sebastian, quietly.

"I am, Don."

"Then I entreat you, tell me if to the best of your own convictions, this your story is in substance really true? It is so passing wonderful! Did you get it from an unquestionable source? Bear with me if I seem to press."

"Also bear with all of us, sir sailor; for we all join in Don Sebastian's suit," cried the company, with exceeding interest.

"Is there a copy of the Holy Evangelists[9] in the Golden Inn, gentlemen?"

"Nay," said Don Sebastian; "but I know a worthy priest near by, who will quickly procure one for me. I go for it; but are you well advised? this may grow too serious."

"Will you be so good as to bring the priest also, Don?"

"Though there are no Auto-da-Fés[1] in Lima now," said one of the company to another; "I fear our sailor friend runs risk of the archiepiscopacy. Let us withdraw more out of the moonlight. I see no need of this."

"Excuse me for running after you, Don Sebastian; but may I also beg that you will be particular in procuring the largest sized Evangelists you can."

* * * * * *

"This is the priest, he brings you the Evangelists," said Don Sebastian, gravely, returning with a tall and solemn figure.

"Let me remove my hat. Now, venerable priest, further into the light, and hold the Holy Book before me that I may touch it."

"So help me Heaven, and on my honor, the story I have told ye, gentlemen, is in substance and its great items, true. I know it to be true; it happened on this ball; I trod the ship; I knew the crew; I have seen and talked with Steelkilt[2] since the death of Radney."

8. Melville's asterisks.
9. The gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, commonly bound together in one volume, on which Ishmael will, with reservations, swear to tell the gospel truth.

1. Ceremonies in which the Inquisition pronounced judgment on heretics before burning them alive. Melville had read an article on witchcraft in the *Quarterly Review* (see "*Moby-Dick* and Melville's Notes in His Shakespeare," on p. 543) and had begun identifying himself with victims in auto-da-fé, to whom he thought of dedicating his satire of American optimism, *The Confidence-Man* (1857). See p. 570, n. 2.
2. Steelkilt was partly based on Luther Fox, a young murderer from Rensselaerville, New York (a village bearing the name of Melville's mother's ancestors), who was put ashore at Honolulu in irons in 1843, just after Melville arrived there, and with whom Melville had talked at the caleboose. A naive young man, later appalled at himself, Fox had committed a hotheaded manslaughter because no one had ever taught him that he would not lose his pride of manhood if he backed down after boldly taking his stand (which was that he was going to finish his breakfast before going on duty). Fox had struck one blow against the mate of his ship, the *Nassau*, who then uttered a memorable sentence: "Fox has cut my leg off with a mincing knife." What had

CHAPTER 55

MONSTROUS PICTURES OF WHALES[1]

I shall ere long paint to you as well as one can without canvas, something like the true form of the whale as he actually appears to the eye of the whaleman when in his own absolute body the whale is moored alongside the whale-ship so that he can be fairly stepped upon there. It may be worth while, therefore, previously to advert to those curious imaginary portraits of him which even down to the present day confidently challenge the faith of the landsman. It is time to set the world right in this matter, by proving such pictures of the whale all wrong.

It may be that the primal source of all those pictorial delusions will be found among the oldest Hindoo, Egyptian, and Grecian sculptures. For ever since those inventive but unscrupulous times when on the marble panellings of temples, the pedestals of statues, and on shields, medallions, cups, and coins, the dolphin was drawn in scales of chain-armor like Saladin's, and a helmeted head like St. George's;[2] ever since then has something of the same sort of license prevailed, not only in most popular pictures of the whale, but in many scientific presentations of him.

Now, by all odds, the most ancient extant portrait anyways purporting to be the whale's, is to be found in the famous cavern-pagoda of Elephanta,[3] in India. The Brahmins maintain that in the almost endless sculptures of that immemorial pagoda, all the trades and pursuits, every conceivable avocation of man, were prefigured ages before any of them actually came into being. No wonder then, that in some sort our noble profession of whaling should have been there shadowed forth. The Hindoo whale referred to, occurs in a separate department of the wall, depicting the incarnation of Vishnu in the form of leviathan, learnedly known as the Matse Avatar. But though this sculpture is half man and half whale, so as only to give the tail of the latter, yet that small section of him is all wrong.[4] It looks more like the tapering tail of an anaconda, than the broad palms of the true whale's majestic flukes.

But go to the old Galleries, and look now at a great Christian painter's portrait of this fish; for he succeeds no better than the antediluvian Hindoo. It is Guido's picture of Perseus[5] rescuing Andromeda from the

been a simple matter of mismanaged machismo had become tragic, and the events resonated in Melville's imagination the rest of his life, emerging in the story he was working on when he died, *Billy Budd*.

Here, Ishmael's claim to have talked with Steelkilt clinches the authenticity of the story, hitherto attributed only to sailors of the *Town-Ho* by way of Tashtego. In this story about storytelling, the greatest mystery is why we, the readers of a work of fiction—like the young Spanish dons in Lima—need the story to be true.

1. Suggested by a passage in Sir Thomas Browne's *Pseudodoxia Epidemica* (1686). Stuart Frank (1986) reproduces pictures mentioned in this chapter and the next.
2. The legendary slayer of a dragon and patron saint of England (3rd century). Saladin was sultan of Egypt and Syria (1174–1193) and fought the Crusaders, as celebrated in chivalric romances and Sir Walter Scott's *The Talisman* (1835), which Melville knew well, as he did almost all of Scott's novels and poems.
3. There were ornamented rock temples or grottoes in "one major cave and six smaller ones on the island of Elephanta, near Bombay, India, all devoted to Sivaism, the sect of the Hindu religion which worshipped Siva the Destroyer as supreme power rather than Vishnu the Preserver" (Mansfield and Vincent, p. 613).
4. Melville sportively puts the "Matse Avatar" in the wrong cavern and alleges that Vishnu was portrayed as a whale with a tail "all wrong," when he was actually portrayed as a fish.
5. Melville saw this picture by Guido Reni (1575–1642) in London in 1849.

sea-monster or whale. Where did Guido get the model of such a strange creature as that? Nor does Hogarth, in painting the same scene in his own "Perseus Descending,"[6] make out one whit better. The huge corpulence of that Hogarthian monster undulates on the surface, scarcely drawing one inch of water. It has a sort of howdah on its back, and its distended tusked mouth into which the billows are rolling, might be taken for the Traitors' Gate leading from the Thames by water into the Tower. Then, there are the Prodromus whales of old Scotch Sibbald,[7] and Jonah's whale, as depicted in the prints of old Bibles and the cuts of old primers. What shall be said of these? As for the bookbinder's whale winding like a vine-stalk round the stock of a descending anchor—as stamped and gilded on the backs and title-pages of many books both old and new—that is a very picturesque but purely fabulous creature, imitated, I take it, from the like figures on antique vases. Though universally denominated a dolphin, I nevertheless call this book-binder's fish an attempt at a whale; because it was so intended when the device was first introduced. It was introduced by an old Italian publisher[8] somewhere about the 15th century, during the Revival of Learning; and in those days, and even down to a comparatively late period, dolphins were popularly supposed to be a species of the Leviathan.

In the vignettes and other embellishments of some ancient books you will at times meet with very curious touches at the whale, where all manner of spouts, jets d'eau, hot springs and cold, Saratoga and Baden-Baden,[9] come bubbling up from his unexhausted brain. In the title-page of the original edition of the "Advancement of Learning"[1] you will find some curious whales.

But quitting all these unprofessional attempts, let us glance at those pictures of leviathan purporting to be sober, scientific delineations, by those who know. In old Harris's collection of voyages there are some plates of whales[2] extracted from a Dutch book of voyages, A. D. 1671, entitled "A Whaling Voyage to Spitzbergen in the ship Jonas in the Whale, Peter Peterson of Friesland, master." In one of those plates the whales, like great rafts of logs, are represented lying among ice-isles, with white bears running over their living backs. In another plate, the prodigious blunder is made of representing the whale with perpendicular flukes.

Then again, there is an imposing quarto, written by one Captain Colnett,[3] a Post Captain in the English navy, entitled "A Voyage round Cape Horn into the South Seas, for the purpose of extending the Spermaceti Whale Fisheries." In this book is an outline purporting to be a "Picture of a Physeter or Spermaceti whale, drawn by scale from one killed on the coast of Mexico, August, 1793, and hoisted on deck." I doubt not the captain had this veracious picture taken for the benefit of his marines.[4] To mention but

6. The picture by William Hogarth is an illustration in Lewis Theobold's *Perseus and Andromeda* (1730).
7. The Latin word *Prodromus* (Introduction) is in the title *Scotia illustrata sive Prodromus historiæ naturalis* (1684) by Robert Sibbald, but the book has no whale pictures. A 1692 book by Sibbald has two plates showing whales.
8. Aldus Manutius, who founded his printing house in Venice in 1595.
9. Resorts in upstate New York and in Germany, respectively.
1. Sir Francis Bacon's *Advancement of Learning* was published in 1605.
2. In John Harris's *Navigantium atque Itinerarium Bibliotheca* (1705), facing I, 617 and 629.
3. *James Colnett's Voyage . . . for the Purpose of Extending the Spermaceti Whale Fisheries* (1798).
4. These soldiers, assigned to keep order on shipboard, were treated by resentful sailors as credulous in maritime matters, as in the expression, "tell that to the marines," meaning marines will believe anything.

one thing about it, let me say that it has an eye which applied, according to the accompanying scale, to a full grown sperm whale, would make the eye of that whale a bow-window some five feet long. Ah, my gallant captain, why did ye not give us Jonah looking out of that eye!

Nor are the most conscientious compilations of Natural History for the benefit of the young and tender, free from the same heinousness of mistake. Look at that popular work "Goldsmith's Animated Nature."[5] In the abridged London edition of 1807, there are plates of an alleged "whale" and a "narwhale." I do not wish to seem inelegant, but this unsightly whale looks much like an amputated sow; and, as for the narwhale, one glimpse at it is enough to amaze one, that in this nineteenth century such a hippogriff[6] could be palmed for genuine upon any intelligent public of schoolboys.

Then, again, in 1825, Bernard Germain, Count de Lacépède, a great naturalist, published a scientific systemized whale book, wherein are several pictures of the different species of the Leviathan. All these are not only incorrect, but the picture of the Mysticetus or Greenland whale (that is to say, the Right whale), even Scoresby, a long experienced man as touching that species, declares not to have its counterpart in nature.

But the placing of the cap-sheaf to all this blundering business was reserved for the scientific Frederick Cuvier, brother to the famous Baron. In 1836, he published a Natural History of Whales, in which he gives what he calls a picture of the Sperm Whale. Before showing that picture to any Nantucketer, you had best provide for your summary retreat from Nantucket. In a word, Frederick Cuvier's Sperm Whale is not a Sperm Whale, but a squash. Of course, he never had the benefit of a whaling voyage (such men seldom have), but whence he derived that picture, who can tell? Perhaps he got it as his scientific predecessor in the same field, Desmarest,[7] got one of his authentic abortions; that is, from a Chinese drawing. And what sort of lively lads with the pencil those Chinese are, many queer cups and saucers inform us.

As for the sign-painters' whales seen in the streets hanging over the shops of oil-dealers, what shall be said of them? They are generally Richard III. whales, with dromedary humps,[8] and very savage; breakfasting on three or four sailor tarts, that is whaleboats full of mariners: their deformities floundering in seas of blood and blue paint.

But these manifold mistakes in depicting the whale are not so very surprising after all. Consider! Most of the scientific drawings have been taken from the stranded fish; and these are about as correct as a drawing of a wrecked ship, with broken back, would correctly represent the noble animal itself in all its undashed pride of hull and spars. Though elephants have stood for their full-lengths, the living Leviathan has never yet fairly floated himself for his portrait. The living whale, in his full majesty and significance, is only to be seen at sea in unfathomable waters; and afloat

5. *History of the Earth and Animated Nature* (1774) was a popular work by the Irish author Oliver Goldsmith (1730–1774).
6. Legendary animal that is half horse, half griffin (and a griffin is part eagle, part lion).
7. Mansfield and Vincent (p. 748) point out that the references to Lacépède, Frederick Cuvier, and Desmarest are secondhand, mainly from Beale, including the notions of Chinese drawings. Melville took from Scoresby (1820) the citation of Lacépède's 1804 (not 1825) work.
8. Like the king in Shakespeare's *Richard III*.

the vast bulk of him is out of sight, like a launched line-of-battle ship;[9] and out of that element it is a thing eternally impossible for mortal man to hoist him bodily into the air, so as to preserve all his mighty swells and undulations. And, not to speak of the highly presumable difference of contour between a young sucking whale and a full-grown Platonian Leviathan;[1] yet, even in the case of one of those young sucking whales hoisted to a ship's deck, such is then the outlandish, eel-like, limbered, varying shape of him, that his precise expression the devil himself could not catch.

But it may be fancied, that from the naked skeleton of the stranded whale, accurate hints may be derived touching his true form. Not at all. For it is one of the more curious things about this Leviathan, that his skeleton gives very little idea of his general shape. Though Jeremy Bentham's skeleton, which hangs for candelabra[2] in the library of one of his executors, correctly conveys the idea of a burly-browed utilitarian old gentleman, with all Jeremy's other leading personal characteristics; yet nothing of this kind could be inferred from any leviathan's articulated bones. In fact, as the great Hunter[3] says, the mere skeleton of the whale bears the same relation to the fully invested and padded animal as the insect does to the chrysalis that so roundingly envelopes it. This peculiarity is strikingly evinced in the head, as in some part of this book will be incidentally shown. It is also very curiously displayed in the side fin, the bones of which almost exactly answer to the bones of the human hand, minus only the thumb. This fin has four regular bone-fingers, the index, middle, ring, and little finger. But all these are permanently lodged in their fleshy covering, as the human fingers in an artificial covering. "However recklessly the whale may sometimes serve us," said humorous Stubb one day, "he can never be truly said to handle us without mittens."

For all these reasons, then, any way you may look at it, you must needs conclude that the great Leviathan is that one creature in the world which must remain unpainted to the last. True, one portrait may hit the mark much nearer than another, but none can hit it with any very considerable degree of exactness. So there is no earthly way of finding out precisely what the whale really looks like. And the only mode in which you can derive even a tolerable idea of his living contour, is by going a whaling yourself; but by so doing, you run no small risk of being eternally stove and sunk by him. Wherefore, it seems to me you had best not be too fastidious in your curiosity touching this Leviathan.

9. Largest battleships, carrying the most guns, for firing broadsides at enemy ships when drawn up at sea in line with others.
1. Ideal; in terms of Plato's philosophy, an actual whale embodying the Idea of the Whale.
2. This Utilitarian English philosopher (1748–1832) left his clothed skeleton (with a wax head) to the University of London, where it was exhibited, but not used as a candle holder.
3. Mansfield and Vincent (p. 748) show that Melville had read the Scottish anatomist John Hunter only as quoted by Beale. Melville copied into Frederick D. Bennett's *Narrative of a Whaling Voyage* (1840) a remarkable tribute he found in William Hazlitt's *Table Talk*: "John Hunter was a great man. He would set about cutting up the carcass of a whale, with the same greatness of gusto, that Michael Angelo would have hewn a block of marble." Melville's Edinburgh-educated friend, Dr. John W. Francis, talked often of Hunter.

CHAPTER 56

OF THE LESS ERRONEOUS PICTURES OF WHALES, AND THE TRUE PICTURES OF WHALING SCENES

In connexion with the monstrous pictures of whales, I am strongly tempted here to enter upon those still more monstrous stories of them which are to be found in certain books, both ancient and modern, especially in Pliny, Purchas, Hackluyt, Harris, Cuvier, &c.[1] But I pass that matter by.

I know of only four published outlines of the great Sperm Whale; Colnett's, Huggins's, Frederick Cuvier's, and Beale's. In the previous chapter Colnett and Cuvier have been referred to. Huggins's is far better than theirs; but, by great odds, Beale's is the best. All Beale's drawings of this whale are good, excepting the middle figure in the picture of three whales in various attitudes, capping his second chapter. His frontispiece, boats attacking Sperm Whales, though no doubt calculated to excite the civil scepticism of some parlor men, is admirably correct and life-like in its general effect. Some of the Sperm Whale drawings in J. Ross Browne[2] are pretty correct in contour; but they are wretchedly engraved. That is not his fault though.

Of the Right Whale, the best outline pictures are in Scoresby; but they are drawn on too small a scale to convey a desirable impression. He has but one picture of whaling scenes, and this is a sad deficiency, because it is by such pictures only, when at all well done, that you can derive anything like a truthful idea of the living whale as seen by his living hunters.

But, taken for all in all, by far the finest, though in some details not the most correct, presentations of whales and whaling scenes to be anywhere found, are two large French engravings, well executed, and taken from paintings by one Garnery.[3] Respectively, they represent attacks on the Sperm and Right Whale. In the first engraving a noble Sperm Whale is depicted in full majesty of might, just risen beneath the boat from the profundities of the ocean, and bearing high in the air upon his back the terrific wreck of the stoven planks. The prow of the boat is partially unbroken, and is drawn just balancing upon the monster's spine; and standing in that prow, for that one single incomputable flash of time, you behold an oarsman, half shrouded by the incensed boiling spout of the whale, and in the act of leaping, as if from a precipice. The action of the whole thing is wonderfully good and true. The half-emptied line-tub floats on the whitened sea; the wooden poles of the spilled harpoons obliquely bob in it; the heads of the swimming crew are scattered about the whale in contrasting expressions of affright; while in the black stormy distance the ship is bearing down upon the scene. Serious fault might be found with the anatomical details of this whale, but let that pass; since, for the life of me, I could not draw so good a one.

In the second engraving, the boat is in the act of drawing alongside the barnacled flank of a large running Right Whale, that rolls his black weedy bulk in the sea like some mossy rock-slide from the Patagonian cliffs. His

1. Manfield and Vincent (748–49) point out that Melville found all this discussion in "the ever-reliable Beale."
2. See Melville's 1847 review on p. 536 herein.
3. French marine painter Ambrose Louis Garneray (spelled Garnery in one of the two engravings Melville praises).

jets are erect, full, and black like soot; so that from so abounding a smoke in the chimney, you would think there must be a brave supper cooking in the great bowels below. Sea fowls are pecking at the small crabs, shellfish, and other sea candies and maccaroni, which the Right Whale sometimes carries on his pestilent back. And all the while the thick-lipped leviathan is rushing through the deep, leaving tons of tumultuous white curds in his wake, and causing the slight boat to rock in the swells like a skiff caught nigh the paddle-wheels of an ocean steamer. Thus, the foreground is all raging commotion; but behind, in admirable artistic contrast, is the glassy level of a sea becalmed, the drooping unstarched sails of the powerless ship, and the inert mass of a dead whale, a conquered fortress, with the flag of capture[4] lazily hanging from the whale-pole inserted into his spout-hole.

Who Garnery the painter is, or was, I know not. But my life for it he was either practically conversant with his subject, or else marvellously tutored by some experienced whaleman. The French are the lads for painting action. Go and gaze upon all the paintings of Europe, and where will you find such a gallery of living and breathing commotion on canvas, as in that triumphal hall at Versailles;[5] where the beholder fights his way, pell-mell, through the consecutive great battles of France; where every sword seems a flash of the Northern Lights, and the successive armed kings and Emperors dash by, like a charge of crowned centaurs? Not wholly unworthy of a place in that gallery, are these sea battle-pieces of Garnery.

The natural aptitude of the French for seizing the picturesqueness of things seems to be peculiarly evinced in what paintings and engravings they have of their whaling scenes. With not one tenth of England's experience in the fishery, and not the thousandth part of that of the Americans, they have nevertheless furnished both nations with the only finished sketches at all capable of conveying the real spirit of the whale hunt. For the most part, the English and American whale draughtsmen seem entirely content with presenting the mechanical outline of things, such as the vacant profile of the whale; which, so far as picturesqueness of effect is concerned, is about tantamount to sketching the profile of a pyramid. Even Scoresby, the justly renowned Right whaleman, after giving us a stiff full length of the Greenland whale, and three or four delicate miniatures of narwhales and porpoises, treats us to a series of classical engravings of boat hooks, chopping knives, and grapnels; and with the microscopic diligence of a Leuwenhoeck[6] submits to the inspection of a shivering world ninety-six fac-similes of magnified Arctic snow crystals. I mean no disparagement to the excellent voyager (I honor him for a veteran), but in so important a matter it was certainly an oversight not to have procured for every crystal a sworn affidavit taken before a Greenland Justice of the Peace.

In addition to those fine engravings from Garnery, there are two other French engravings worthy of note, by some one who subscribes himself

4. A pennon on the waif-pole. "Unstarched sails": figurative; not stiffened by force of the wind.
5. In 1849, Melville saw the gigantic paintings in the Hall of Battles at Versailles. One of the enormous paintings, of General Cornwallis's surrender at Yorktown, provoked hilarity among American viewers, including Melville's friend Henry T. Tuckerman, because George Washington is depicted as a casually involved bystander while the true victor is the French General Rochambeau. Melville would have looked in vain in the painting for his grandfather, General Peter Gansevoort, who was also present at the surrender.
6. Variant spelling for Anton van Leeuwenhoek (1632–1723), Dutch pioneer maker of microscopes.

"H. Durand."[7] One of them, though not precisely adapted to our present purpose, nevertheless deserves mention on other accounts. It is a quiet noon-scene among the isles of the Pacific; a French whaler anchored, inshore, in a calm, and lazily taking water on board; the loosened sails of the ship, and the long leaves of the palms in the background, both drooping together in the breezeless air. The effect is very fine, when considered with reference to its presenting the hardy fishermen under one of their few aspects of oriental repose. The other engraving is quite a different affair: the ship hove-to upon the open sea, and in the very heart of the Leviathanic life, with a Right Whale alongside; the vessel (in the act of cutting-in) hove over to the monster as if to a quay; and a boat, hurriedly pushing off from this scene of activity, is about giving chase to whales in the distance. The harpoons and lances lie levelled for use; three oarsmen are just setting the mast in its hole; while from a sudden roll of the sea, the little craft stands half-erect out of the water, like a rearing horse. From the ship, the smoke of the torments of the boiling whale is going up like the smoke over a village of smithies;[8] and to windward, a black cloud, rising up with earnest of squalls and rains, seems to quicken the activity of the excited seamen.

CHAPTER 57

OF WHALES IN PAINT; IN TEETH; IN WOOD; IN SHEET-IRON; IN STONE; IN MOUNTAINS; IN STARS

On Tower-hill,[1] as you go down to the London docks, you may have seen a crippled beggar (or *kedger*, as the sailors say) holding a painted board before him, representing the tragic scene in which he lost his leg. There are three whales and three boats; and one of the boats (presumed to contain the missing leg in all its original integrity) is being crunched by the jaws of the foremost whale. Any time these ten years, they tell me, has that man held up that picture, and exhibited that stump to an incredulous world. But the time of his justification has now come. His three whales are as good whales as were ever published in Wapping,[2] at any rate; and his stump as unquestionable a stump as any you will find in the western clearings. But, though for ever mounted on that stump, never a stump-speech does the poor whaleman make; but, with downcast eyes, stands ruefully contemplating his own amputation.

Throughout the Pacific, and also in Nantucket, and New Bedford, and Sag Harbor, you will come across lively sketches of whales and whaling-scenes, graven by the fishermen themselves on Sperm Whale-teeth, or ladies' busks[3] wrought out of the Right Whale-bone, and other like skrimshander articles, as the whale men call the numerous little ingenious contrivances they elaborately carve out of the rough material, in their hours of ocean leisure. Some of them have little boxes of dentistical-looking

7. Stuart Frank (1986, pp. 80–83) identifies this artist as Henri Durand-Brager (1814–1879) and reproduces these "two other French engravings worthy of note."
8. Village full of blacksmith shops (instead of the usual one or two for any village).
1. Near the Tower of London.
2. An area of docks and slums, not of publishing, is to the east.
3. Corsets.

implements, specially intended for the skrimshandering[4] business. But, in general, they toil with their jack-knives alone; and, with that almost omnipotent tool of the sailor, they will turn you out anything you please, in the way of a mariner's fancy.

Long exile from Christendom and civilization inevitably restores a man to that condition in which God placed him, *i.e.* what is called savagery. Your true whale-hunter is as much a savage as an Iroquois. I myself am a savage, owning no allegiance but to the King of the Cannibals; and ready at any moment to rebel against him.

Now, one of the peculiar characteristics of the savage in his domestic hours, is his wonderful patience of industry. An ancient Hawaiian war-club or spear-paddle, in its full multiplicity and elaboration of carving, is as great a trophy of human perseverance as a Latin lexicon. For, with but a bit of broken sea-shell or a shark's tooth, that miraculous intricacy of wooden net-work has been achieved; and it has cost steady years of steady application.

As with the Hawaiian savage, so with the white sailor-savage. With the same marvellous patience, and with the same single shark's tooth, of his one poor jack-knife, he will carve you a bit of bone sculpture, not quite as workmanlike, but as close packed in its maziness of design, as the Greek savage, Achilles's shield;[5] and full of barbaric spirit and suggestiveness, as the prints of that fine old Dutch savage, Albert Durer.[6]

Wooden whales, or whales cut in profile out of the small dark slabs of the noble South Sea war-wood, are frequently met with in the forecastles of American whalers. Some of them are done with much accuracy.

At some old gable-roofed country houses you will see brass whales hung by the tail for knockers to the road-side door. When the porter is sleepy, the anvil-headed whale would be best. But these knocking whales are seldom remarkable as faithful essays. On the spires of some old-fashioned churches you will see sheet-iron whales placed there for weather-cocks; but they are so elevated, and besides that are to all intents and purposes so labelled with "*Hands off!*" you cannot examine them closely enough to decide upon their merit.

In bony, ribby regions of the earth, where at the base of high broken cliffs masses of rock lie strewn in fantastic groupings upon the plain, you will often discover images as of the petrified forms of the Leviathan partly merged in grass, which of a windy day breaks against them in a surf of green surges.

Then, again, in mountainous countries where the traveller is continually girdled by amphitheatrical heights; here and there from some lucky point of view you will catch passing glimpses of the profiles of whales defined along the undulating ridges. But you must be a thorough whaleman, to see these sights; and not only that, but if you wish to return to such a sight again, you must be sure and take the exact intersecting latitude and longitude of your first stand-point, else—so chance-like are such observations of the hills—your precise, previous stand-point would require a laborious re-discovery;

4. See p. 25.
5. Homer's *Iliad*, book 18, describes this Greek hero's shield.
6. Albrecht Durer (1471–1528), painter and wood engraver. "Dutch": or Deutsch, colloquial for German, as in "Pennsylvania Dutch."

like the Soloma islands, which still remain incognita, though once high-ruffed Mendanna trod them and old Figuera chronicled them.[7]

Nor when expandingly lifted by your subject, can you fail to trace out great whales in the starry heavens, and boats in pursuit of them; as when long filled with thoughts of war the Eastern nations saw armies locked in battle among the clouds. Thus at the North have I chased Leviathan round and round the Pole with the revolutions of the bright points that first defined him to me.[8] And beneath the effulgent Antarctic skies I have boarded the Argo-Navis, and joined the chase against the starry Cetus far beyond the utmost stretch of Hydrus and the Flying Fish.[9]

With a frigate's anchors for my bridle-bitts and fasces[1] of harpoons for spurs, would I could mount that whale and leap the topmost skies, to see whether the fabled heavens with all their countless tents really lie encamped beyond my mortal sight!

CHAPTER 58

BRIT

Steering north-eastward from the Crozetts, we fell in with vast meadows of brit,[1] the minute, yellow substance, upon which the Right Whale largely feeds. For leagues and leagues it undulated round us, so that we seemed to be sailing through boundless fields of ripe and golden wheat.

On the second day, numbers of Right Whales were seen, who, secure from the attack of a Sperm Whaler like the Pequod, with open jaws sluggishly swam through the brit, which, adhering to the fringing fibres of that wondrous Venetian blind in their mouths, was in that manner separated from the water that escaped at the lip.

As morning mowers, who side by side slowly and seethingly advance their scythes through the long wet grass of marshy meads; even so these monsters swam, making a strange, grassy, cutting sound; and leaving behind them endless swaths of blue upon the yellow sea.[2]

But it was only the sound they made as they parted the brit which at all reminded one of mowers. Seen from the mast-heads, especially when they paused and were stationary for a while, their vast black forms looked more like lifeless masses of rock than anything else. And as in the great hunting countries of India, the stranger at a distance will sometimes pass on the plains recumbent elephants without knowing them to be such, taking them for bare, blackened elevations of the soil; even so, often, with him, who for the first time beholds this species of the leviathans of the sea. And even when

7. Alvaro de Mendanna discovered the Solomon Islands in 1568, but they were not found again for two centuries. Christóbal Suarez de Figuera chronicled de Mendanna's *Voyage* (1613). The spelling Soloma may allow Melville to keep his example incognita.
8. Ishmael imagines riding in the Big Dipper ("the bright points") as it circles the North Pole, in pursuit of the sperm whale.
9. Southern constellations: Argo (the Ship), Cetus (the Whale), Hydrus (the Water Snake), and Pisces (the Flying Fish).

1. Bundle of rods with a projecting ax-head.
1. Composed of tiny crustaceans.
2. That part of the sea known among whalemen as the "Brazil Banks" does not bear that name as the Banks of Newfoundland do, because of there being shallows and soundings there, but because of this remarkable meadow-like appearance, caused by the vast drifts of brit continually floating in those latitudes, where the Right Whale is often chased. [Melville's note.]

recognised at last, their immense magnitude renders it very hard really to believe that such bulky masses of overgrowth can possibly be instinct, in all parts, with the same sort of life that lives in a dog or a horse.

Indeed, in other respects, you can hardly regard any creatures of the deep with the same feelings that you do those of the shore. For though some old naturalists have maintained that all creatures of the land are of their kind[3] in the sea; and though taking a broad general view of the thing, this may very well be; yet coming to specialities, where, for example, does the ocean furnish any fish that in disposition answers to the sagacious kindness of the dog? The accursed shark alone can in any generic respect be said to bear comparative analogy to him.

But though, to landsmen in general, the native inhabitants of the seas have ever been regarded with emotions unspeakably unsocial and repelling; though we know the sea to be an everlasting terra incognita,[4] so that Columbus sailed over numberless unknown worlds to discover his one superficial western one; though, by vast odds, the most terrific of all mortal disasters have immemorially and indiscriminately befallen tens and hundreds of thousands of those who have gone upon the waters; though but a moment's consideration will teach, that however baby man may brag of his science and skill, and however much, in a flattering future, that science and skill may augment; yet for ever and for ever, to the crack of doom, the sea will insult and murder him, and pulverize the stateliest, stiffest frigate he can make; nevertheless, by the continual repetition of these very impressions, man has lost that sense of the full awfulness of the sea which aboriginally belongs to it.

The first boat[5] we read of, floated on an ocean, that with Portuguese vengeance had whelmed a whole world without leaving so much as a widow. That same ocean rolls now; that same ocean destroyed the wrecked ships of last year. Yea, foolish mortals, Noah's flood is not yet subsided; two thirds of the fair world it yet covers.

Wherein differ the sea and the land, that a miracle upon one is not a miracle upon the other? Preternatural terrors rested upon the Hebrews, when under the feet of Korah[6] and his company the live ground opened and swallowed them up for ever; yet not a modern sun ever sets, but in precisely the same manner the live sea swallows up ships and crews.

But not only is the sea such a foe to man who is an alien to it, but it is also a fiend to its own offspring; worse than the Persian host[7] who murdered his own guests; sparing not the creatures which itself hath spawned. Like a savage tigress that tossing in the jungle overlays her own cubs, so the sea dashes even the mightiest whales against the rocks, and

3. Have counterparts.
4. Unknown land (Latin).
5. Noah's ark, in the flood that "whelmed a world" (Genesis 6–7), as the great 1755 earthquake destroyed Lisbon, Portugal. In the Protestant English-speaking world, Spanish and Portuguese were associated with ruthless vengeance due to Nativist anti-Catholic rhetoric that was perpetuated during this time.
6. Numbers 16.32–33: "And the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed them up, and their houses, and all the men that appertained unto Korah, and all their goods. They, and all that appertained to them, went down alive into the pit."
7. No such Persian has been identified, but Melville repeatedly referred to this specific act of treachery, attributed (in a complicated ironic narration) to an Indian in the Kentucky area, Mocmohoc, and the Italian Cesare Borgia (in *The Confidence-Man*, ch. 26), and to Borgia again (in Melville's late poem "At The Hostelry"). The violator of hospitality and kin-slayer Ixion (see the "Epilogue") is another of these treacherous figures.

leaves them there side by side with the split wrecks of ships. No mercy, no power but its own controls it. Panting and snorting like a mad battle steed that has lost its rider, the masterless ocean overruns the globe.

Consider the subtleness of the sea; how its most dreaded creatures glide under water, unapparent for the most part, and treacherously hidden beneath the loveliest tints of azure. Consider also the devilish brilliance and beauty of many of its most remorseless tribes, as the dainty embellished shape of many species of sharks. Consider, once more, the universal cannibalism of the sea; all whose creatures prey upon each other, carrying on eternal war since the world began.

Consider all this; and then turn to this green, gentle, and most docile earth; consider them both, the sea and the land; and do you not find a strange analogy to something in yourself? For as this appalling ocean surrounds the verdant land, so in the soul of man there lies one insular Tahiti,[8] full of peace and joy, but encompassed by all the horrors of the half known life. God keep thee! Push not off from that isle, thou canst never return!

CHAPTER 59

Squid[1]

Slowly wading through the meadows of brit, the Pequod still held on her way north-eastward towards the island of Java; a gentle air impelling her keel, so that in the surrounding serenity her three tall tapering masts mildly waved to that languid breeze, as three mild palms on a plain. And still, at wide intervals in the silvery night, the lonely, alluring jet would be seen.

But one transparent blue morning, when a stillness almost preternatural spread over the sea, however unattended with any stagnant calm; when the long burnished sun-glade on the waters seemed a golden finger laid across them, enjoining some secresy; when the slippered waves whispered together as they softly ran on; in this profound hush of the visible sphere a strange spectre was seen by Daggoo from the main-mast-head.

In the distance, a great white mass lazily rose, and rising higher and higher, and disentangling itself from the azure, at last gleamed before our prow like a snow-slide, new slid from the hills. Thus glistening for a moment, as slowly it subsided,[2] and sank. Then once more arose, and silently gleamed. It seemed not a whale; and yet is this Moby Dick? thought Daggoo. Again the phantom went down, but on re-appearing once more, with a stiletto-like cry that startled every man from his nod, the negro yelled out—"There! there again! there she breaches! right ahead! The White Whale, the White Whale!"

Upon this, the seamen rushed to the yard-arms, as in swarming-time the bees rush to the boughs. Bare-headed in the sultry sun, Ahab stood on the bowsprit, and with one hand pushed far behind in readiness to wave his orders to the helmsman, cast his eager glance in the direction indicated aloft by the outstretched motionless arm of Daggoo.

8. South Sea island, still like paradise when Melville spent weeks there as prisoner and beachcomber in 1842 (see *Omoo*, 1847).

1. Mansfield and Vincent (pp. 752–53) point out Melville's use of Beale (1839), Bennett (1840), and Olmsted (1841) in this chapter.

2. I.e., it subsided as slowly as it had risen.

Whether the flitting attendance of the one still and solitary jet had gradually worked upon Ahab, so that he was now prepared to connect the ideas of mildness and repose with the first sight of the particular whale he pursued; however this was, or whether his eagerness betrayed him; whichever way it might have been, no sooner did he distinctly perceive the white mass, than with a quick intensity he instantly gave orders for lowering.

The four boats were soon on the water; Ahab's in advance, and all swiftly pulling towards their prey. Soon it went down, and while, with oars suspended, we were awaiting its reappearance, lo! in the same spot where it sank, once more it slowly rose. Almost forgetting for the moment all thoughts of Moby Dick, we now gazed at the most wondrous phenomenon which the secret seas have hitherto revealed to mankind. A vast pulpy mass, furlongs in length and breadth, of a glancing cream-color, lay floating on the water, innumerable long arms radiating from its centre, and curling and twisting like a nest of anacondas,[3] as if blindly to clutch at any hapless object within reach. No perceptible face or front did it have; no conceivable token of either sensation or instinct; but undulated there on the billows, an unearthly, formless, chance-like apparition of life.

As with a low sucking sound it slowly disappeared again, Starbuck still gazing at the agitated waters where it had sunk, with a wild voice exclaimed—"Almost rather had I seen Moby Dick and fought him, than to have seen thee, thou white ghost!"

"What was it, Sir?" said Flask.

"The great live squid, which, they say, few whale-ships ever beheld, and returned to their ports to tell of it."

But Ahab said nothing; turning his boat, he sailed back to the vessel; the rest as silently following.

Whatever superstitions the sperm whalemen in general have connected with the sight of this object, certain it is, that a glimpse of it being so very unusual, that circumstance has gone far to invest it with portentousness. So rarely is it beheld, that though one and all of them declare it to be the largest animated thing in the ocean, yet very few of them have any but the most vague ideas concerning its true nature and form; notwithstanding, they believe it to furnish to the sperm whale his only food. For though other species of whales find their food above water, and may be seen by man in the act of feeding, the spermaceti whale obtains his whole food in unknown zones below the surface; and only by inference is it that any one can tell of what, precisely, that food consists. At times, when closely pursued, he will disgorge what are supposed to be the detached arms of the squid; some of them thus exhibited exceeding twenty and thirty feet in length. They fancy that the monster to which these arms belonged ordinarily clings by them to the bed of the ocean; and that the sperm whale, unlike other species, is supplied with teeth in order to attack and tear it.

There seems some ground to imagine that the great Kraken[4] of Bishop Pontoppidan may ultimately resolve itself into Squid. The manner in which the Bishop describes it, as alternately rising and sinking, with some other particulars he narrates, in all this the two correspond. But much abatement is necessary with respect to the incredible bulk he assigns it.

3. Semi-aquatic anacondas may be ten yards long. A furlong is 220 yards.
4. Monster described in Erik Pontoppidan's *Natural History of Norway* (1752–53), quoted in John Knox, *A New Collection of Voyages* (1767).

By some naturalists who have vaguely heard rumors of the mysterious creature, here spoken of, it is included among the class of cuttle-fish, to which, indeed, in certain external respects it would seem to belong, but only as the Anak[5] of the tribe.

CHAPTER 60

THE LINE[1]

With reference to the whaling scene shortly to be described, as well as for the better understanding of all similar scenes elsewhere presented, I have here to speak of the magical, sometimes horrible whale-line.

The line originally used in the fishery was of the best hemp, slightly vapored with tar, not impregnated with it, as in the case of ordinary ropes; for while tar, as ordinarily used, makes the hemp more pliable to the rope-maker, and also renders the rope itself more convenient to the sailor for common ship use; yet, not only would the ordinary quantity too much stiffen the whale-line for the close coiling to which it must be subjected; but as most seamen are beginning to learn, tar in general by no means adds to the rope's durability or strength, however much it may give it compactness and gloss.

Of late years the Manilla rope has in the American fishery almost entirely superseded hemp as a material for whale-lines; for, though not so durable as hemp, it is stronger, and far more soft and elastic; and I will add (since there is an æsthetics in all things), is much more handsome and becoming to the boat, than hemp. Hemp is a dusky, dark fellow, a sort of Indian; but Manilla is as a golden-haired Circassian to behold.[2]

The whale line is only two thirds of an inch in thickness. At first sight, you would not think it so strong as it really is. By experiment its one and fifty yarns, will each suspend a weight of one hundred and twelve pounds; so that the whole rope will bear a strain nearly equal to three tons. In length, the common sperm whale-line measures something over two hundred fathoms.[3] Towards the stern of the boat it is spirally coiled away in the tub, not like the worm-pipe of a still though, but so as to form one round, cheese-shaped mass of densely bedded "sheaves," or layers of concentric spiralizations, without any hollow but the "heart," or minute vertical tube formed at the axis of the cheese. As the least tangle or kink in the coiling would, in running out, infallibly take somebody's arm, leg, or entire body off, the utmost precaution is used in stowing the line in its tub. Some harpooneers will consume almost an entire morning in this business, carrying the line high aloft and then reeving it downwards through a block[4] towards the tub, so as in the act of coiling to free it from all possible wrinkles and twists.

In the English boats two tubs are used instead of one; the same line being continuously coiled in both tubs. There is some advantage in this;

5. Numbers 13.33: "And there we saw the giants, the sons of Anak, which come of the giants: and we were in our own sight as grasshoppers, and so were we in their sight."

1. Vincent (1949, 228) shows that Melville adapted his description of hemp rope from Bennett (1840).
2. I.e., hemp is dark, like a native of India, in contrast to Manilla, which is yellow like the hair of Circassians from the Black Sea area of Russia.
3. One fathom is six feet.
4. Pulley.

because these twin-tubs being so small they fit more readily into the boat, and do not strain it so much; whereas, the American tub, nearly three feet in diameter and of proportionate depth, makes a rather bulky freight for a craft whose planks are but one half-inch in thickness; for the bottom of the whale-boat is like critical ice, which will bear up a considerable distributed weight, but not very much of a concentrated one. When the painted canvas cover is clapped on the American line-tub, the boat looks as if it were pulling off with a prodigious great wedding-cake to present to the whales.

Both ends of the line are exposed; the lower end terminating in an eye-splice or loop coming up from the bottom against the side of the tub, and hanging over its edge completely disengaged from everything. This arrangement of the lower end is necessary on two accounts. First: In order to facilitate the fastening to it of an additional line from a neighboring boat, in case the stricken whale should sound so deep as to threaten to carry off the entire line originally attached to the harpoon. In these instances, the whale of course is shifted like a mug of ale, as it were, from the one boat to the other; though the first boat always hovers at hand to assist its consort. Second: This arrangement is indispensable for common safety's sake; for were the lower end of the line in any way attached to the boat, and were the whale then to run the line out to the end almost in a single, smoking minute as he sometimes does, he would not stop there, for the doomed boat would infallibly be dragged down after him into the profundity of the sea; and in that case no town-crier[5] would ever find her again.

Before lowering the boat for the chase, the upper end of the line is taken aft from the tub, and passing round the loggerhead there, is again carried forward the entire length of the boat, resting crosswise upon the loom or handle of every man's oar, so that it jogs against his wrist in rowing; and also passing between the men, as they alternately sit at the opposite gunwales, to the leaded chocks or grooves in the extreme pointed prow of the boat, where a wooden pin or skewer the size of a common quill, prevents it from slipping out. From the chocks it hangs in a slight festoon over the bows, and is then passed inside the boat again; and some ten or twenty fathoms (called box-line) being coiled upon the box in the bows, it continues its way to the gunwale still a little further aft, and is then attached to the short-warp—the rope which is immediately connected with the harpoon; but previous to that connexion, the short-warp goes through sundry mystifications too tedious to detail.

Thus the whale-line folds the whole boat in its complicated coils, twisting and writhing around it in almost every direction. All the oarsmen are involved in its perilous contortions; so that to the timid eye of the landsman, they seem as Indian jugglers,[6] with the deadliest snakes sportively festooning their limbs. Nor can any son of mortal woman, for the first time, seat himself amid those hempen intricacies, and while straining his utmost at the oar, bethink him that at any unknown instant the harpoon may be darted, and all these horrible contortions be put in play like ringed lightnings; he cannot be thus circumstanced without a shudder that makes the very marrow in his bones to quiver in him like a shaken jelly. Yet

5. Town employee who publicly called news, including notices that children were lost or found.
6. Snake charmers in India.

habit—strange thing! what cannot habit accomplish?—Gayer sallies, more merry mirth, better jokes, and brighter repartees, you never heard over your mahogany,[7] than you will hear over the half-inch white cedar of the whale-boat, when thus hung in hangman's nooses; and, like the six burghers of Calais before King Edward,[8] the six men composing the crew pull into the jaws of death, with a halter around every neck, as you may say.

Perhaps a very little thought will now enable you to account for those repeated whaling disasters—some few of which are casually chronicled—of this man or that man being taken out of the boat by the line, and lost. For, when the line is darting out, to be seated then in the boat, is like being seated in the midst of the manifold whizzings of a steam-engine in full play, when every flying beam, and shaft, and wheel, is grazing you. It is worse; for you cannot sit motionless in the heart of these perils, because the boat is rocking like a cradle, and you are pitched one way and the other, without the slightest warning; and only by a certain self-adjusting buoyancy and simultaneousness of volition and action, can you escape being made a Mazeppa[9] of, and run away with where the all-seeing sun himself could never pierce you out.

Again: as the profound calm which only apparently precedes and prophesies of the storm, is perhaps more awful than the storm itself; for, indeed, the calm is but the wrapper and envelope of the storm; and contains it in itself, as the seemingly harmless rifle holds the fatal powder, and the ball, and the explosion; so the graceful repose of the line, as it silently serpentines about the oarsmen before being brought into actual play—this is a thing which carries more of true terror than any other aspect of this dangerous affair. But why say more? All men live enveloped in whale-lines. All are born with halters round their necks; but it is only when caught in the swift, sudden turn of death, that mortals realize the silent, subtle, ever-present perils of life. And if you be a philosopher, though seated in the whale-boat, you would not at heart feel one whit more of terror, than though seated before your evening fire with a poker, and not a harpoon, by your side.

CHAPTER 61

STUBB KILLS A WHALE

If to Starbuck the apparition of the Squid was a thing of portents, to Queequeg it was quite a different object.

"When you see him 'quid," said the savage, honing his harpoon in the bow of his hoisted boat, "then you quick see him 'parm whale."

The next day was exceedingly still and sultry, and with nothing special to engage them, the Pequod's crew could hardly resist the spell of sleep induced by such a vacant sea. For this part of the Indian Ocean through which we then were voyaging is not what whalemen call a lively ground; that is, it affords fewer glimpses of porpoises, dolphins, flying-fish, and

7. Dining table of the best available wood, mahogany.
8. To save their city from destruction in 1347, the leading citizens from the French town of Calais offered themselves with ropes around their necks to the conquering English king, Edward III.
9. In Lord Byron's poem "Mazeppa" (1819), about this 17th-century Cossack leader, a jealous Polish husband ties him to a wild horse, then goads it across the steppes, an ordeal that Mazeppa survives.

other vivacious denizens of more stirring waters, than those off the Rio de la Plata, or the in-shore ground off Peru.

It was my turn to stand at the foremast-head; and with my shoulders leaning against the slackened royal shrouds, to and fro I idly swayed in what seemed an enchanted air. No resolution could withstand it; in that dreamy mood losing all consciousness, at last my soul went out of my body; though my body still continued to sway as a pendulum will, long after the power which first moved it is withdrawn.

Ere forgetfulness altogether came over me, I had noticed that the seamen at the main and mizen mast-heads were already drowsy. So that at last all three of us lifelessly swung from the spars, and for every swing that we made there was a nod from below from the slumbering helmsman. The waves, too, nodded their indolent crests; and across the wide trance of the sea, east nodded to west, and the sun over all.

Suddenly bubbles seemed bursting beneath my closed eyes; like vices my hands grasped the shrouds; some invisible, gracious agency preserved me; with a shock I came back to life. And lo! close under our lee, not forty fathoms off, a gigantic Sperm Whale lay rolling in the water like the capsized hull of a frigate, his broad, glossy back, of an Ethiopian hue,[1] glistening in the sun's rays like a mirror. But lazily undulating in the trough of the sea, and ever and anon tranquilly spouting his vapory jet, the whale looked like a portly burgher smoking his pipe of a warm afternoon. But that pipe, poor whale, was thy last. As if struck by some enchanter's wand, the sleepy ship and every sleeper in it all at once started into wakefulness; and more than a score of voices from all parts of the vessel, simultaneously with the three notes from aloft, shouted forth the accustomed cry, as the great fish slowly and regularly spouted the sparkling brine into the air.

"Clear away the boats! Luff!"[2] cried Ahab. And obeying his own order, he dashed the helm down before the helmsman could handle the spokes.

The sudden exclamations of the crew must have alarmed the whale; and ere the boats were down, majestically turning, he swam away to the leeward, but with such a steady tranquillity, and making so few ripples as he swam, that thinking after all he might not as yet be alarmed, Ahab gave orders that not an oar should be used, and no man must speak but in whispers. So seated like Ontario Indians on the gunwales of the boats, we swiftly but silently paddled along; the calm not admitting of the noiseless sails being set. Presently, as we thus glided in chase, the monster perpendicularly flitted his tail forty feet into the air, and then sank out of sight like a tower swallowed up.

"There go flukes!" was the cry, an announcement immediately followed by Stubb's producing his match and igniting his pipe, for now a respite was granted. After the full interval of his sounding had elapsed, the whale rose again, and being now in advance of the smoker's boat, and much nearer to it than to any of the others, Stubb counted upon the honor of the capture. It was obvious, now, that the whale had at length become aware of his pursuers. All silence of cautiousness was therefore no longer of use. Paddles were dropped, and oars came loudly into play. And still puffing at his pipe, Stubb cheered on his crew to the assault.

1. I.e., dark.
2. Head the ship just close enough to the wind to fill the sails without shaking them.

Yes, a mighty change had come over the fish. All alive to his jeopardy, he was going "head out;" that part obliquely projecting from the mad yeast which he brewed.[3]

"Start her, start her, my men! Don't hurry yourselves; take plenty of time—but start her; start her like thunder-claps, that's all," cried Stubb, spluttering out the smoke as he spoke. "Start her, now; give 'em the long and strong stroke, Tashtego. Start her, Tash, my boy—start her, all; but keep cool, keep cool—cucumbers is the word—easy, easy—only start her like grim death and grinning devils, and raise the buried dead perpendicular out of their graves, boys—that's all. Start her!"

"Woo-hoo! Wa-hee!" screamed the Gay-Header in reply, raising some old war-whoop to the skies; as every oarsman in the strained boat involuntarily bounced forward with the one tremendous leading stroke which the eager Indian gave.

But his wild screams were answered by others quite as wild. "Kee-hee! Kee-hee!" yelled Daggoo, straining forwards and backwards on his seat, like a pacing tiger in his cage.

"Ka-la! Koo-loo!" howled Queequeg, as if smacking his lips over a mouthful of Grenadier's steak.[4] And thus with oars and yells the keels cut the sea. Meanwhile, Stubb retaining his place in the van, still encouraged his men to the onset, all the while puffing the smoke from his mouth. Like desperadoes they tugged and they strained, till the welcome cry was heard—"Stand up, Tashtego!—give it to him!" The harpoon was hurled. "Stern all!" The oarsmen backed water; the same moment something went hot and hissing along every one of their wrists. It was the magical line. An instant before, Stubb had swiftly caught two additional turns with it round the loggerhead, whence, by reason of its increased rapid circlings, a hempen blue smoke now jetted up and mingled with the steady fumes from his pipe. As the line passed round and round the loggerhead; so also, just before reaching that point, it blisteringly passed through and through both of Stubb's hands, from which the hand-cloths, or squares of quilted canvas sometimes worn at these times, had accidentally dropped. It was like holding an enemy's sharp two-edged sword by the blade, and that enemy all the time striving to wrest it out of your clutch.

"Wet the line! wet the line!" cried Stubb to the tub oarsman (him seated by the tub) who, snatching off his hat, dashed the sea-water into it.[5] More turns were taken, so that the line began holding its place. The boat now flew through the boiling water like a shark all fins. Stubb and Tashtego here changed places—stem for stern—a staggering business truly in that rocking commotion.

From the vibrating line extending the entire length of the upper part of the boat, and from its now being more tight than a harpstring, you would

3. It will be seen in some other place of what a very light substance the entire interior of the sperm whale's enormous head consists. Though apparently the most massive, it is by far the most buoyant part about him. So that with ease he elevates it in the air, and invariably does so when going at his utmost speed. Besides, such is the breadth of the upper part of the front of his head, and such the tapering cut-water formation of the lower part, that by obliquely elevating his head, he thereby may be said to transform himself from a bluff-bowed sluggish galliot into a sharp-pointed New York pilot-boat. [Melville's note.]
4. Raw steak fit for a soldier in charge of carrying and setting off grenades (or else steak from the long, tapering, soft-finned deep-water fish of the same name).
5. Partly to show the indispensableness of this act, it may here be stated, that, in the old Dutch fishery, a mop was used to dash the running line with water; in many other ships, a wooden piggin, or bailer, is set apart for that purpose. Your hat, however, is the most convenient. [Melville's note.]

have thought the craft had two keels—one cleaving the water, the other the air—as the boat churned on through both opposing elements at once. A continual cascade played at the bows; a ceaseless whirling eddy in her wake; and, at the slightest motion from within, even but of a little finger, the vibrating, cracking craft canted over her spasmodic gunwale into the sea. Thus they rushed; each man with might and main clinging to his seat, to prevent being tossed to the foam; and the tall form of Tashtego at the steering oar crouching almost double, in order to bring down his centre of gravity. Whole Atlantics and Pacifics seemed passed as they shot on their way, till at length the whale somewhat slackened his flight.

"Haul in—haul in!" cried Stubb to the bowsman; and, facing round towards the whale, all hands began pulling the boat up to him, while yet the boat was being towed on. Soon ranging up by his flank, Stubb, firmly planting his knee in the clumsy cleat, darted dart after dart into the flying fish; at the word of command, the boat alternately sterning out of the way of the whale's horrible wallow, and then ranging up for another fling.

The red tide now poured from all sides of the monster like brooks down a hill. His tormented body rolled not in brine but in blood, which bubbled and seethed for furlongs behind in their wake. The slanting sun playing upon this crimson pond in the sea, sent back its reflection into every face, so that they all glowed to each other like red men. And all the while, jet after jet of white smoke was agonizingly shot from the spiracle[6] of the whale, and vehement puff after puff from the mouth of the excited headsman; as at every dart, hauling in upon his crooked lance (by the line attached to it), Stubb straightened it again and again, by a few rapid blows against the gunwale, then again and again sent it into the whale.

"Pull up—pull up!" he now cried to the bowsman, as the waning whale relaxed in his wrath. "Pull up!—close to!" and the boat ranged along the fish's flank. When reaching far over the bow, Stubb slowly churned his long sharp lance into the fish, and kept it there, carefully churning and churning, as if cautiously seeking to feel after some gold watch that the whale might have swallowed, and which he was fearful of breaking ere he could hook it out. But that gold watch he sought was the innermost life of the fish. And now it is struck; for, starting from his trance into that unspeakable thing called his "flurry," the monster horribly wallowed in his blood, overwrapped himself in impenetrable, mad, boiling spray, so that the imperilled craft, instantly dropping astern, had much ado blindly to struggle out from that phrensied twilight into the clear air of the day.

And now abating in his flurry, the whale once more rolled out into view; surging from side to side; spasmodically dilating and contracting his spout-hole, with sharp, cracking, agonized respirations. At last, gush after gush of clotted red gore, as if it had been the purple lees of red wine, shot into the frighted air; and falling back again, ran dripping down his motionless flanks into the sea. His heart had burst!

"He's dead, Mr. Stubb," said Tashtego.

"Yes; both pipes smoked out!" and withdrawing his own from his mouth, Stubb scattered the dead ashes over the water; and, for a moment, stood thoughtfully eyeing the vast corpse he had made.

6. Spout hole.

CHAPTER 62

THE DART

A word concerning an incident in the last chapter.

According to the invariable usage of the fishery, the whale-boat pushes off from the ship, with the headsman or whale-killer as temporary steersman, and the harpooneer or whale-fastener pulling the foremost oar, the one known as the harpooneer-oar. Now it needs a strong, nervous arm to strike the first iron into the fish; for often, in what is called a long dart, the heavy implement has to be flung to the distance of twenty or thirty feet. But however prolonged and exhausting the chase, the harpooneer is expected to pull his oar meanwhile to the uttermost; indeed, he is expected to set an example of superhuman activity to the rest, not only by incredible rowing, but by repeated loud and intrepid exclamations; and what it is to keep shouting at the top of one's compass, while all the other muscles are strained and half started—what that is none know but those who have tried it. For one, I cannot bawl very heartily and work very recklessly at one and the same time. In this straining, bawling state, then, with his back to the fish, all at once the exhausted harpooneer hears the exciting cry—"Stand up, and give it to him!" He now has to drop and secure his oar, turn round on his centre half way, seize his harpoon from the crotch, and with what little strength may remain, he essays to pitch it somehow into the whale. No wonder, taking the whole fleet of whalemen in a body, that out of fifty fair chances for a dart, not five are successful; no wonder that so many hapless harpooneers are madly cursed and disrated;[1] no wonder that some of them actually burst their blood-vessels in the boat; no wonder that some sperm whalemen are absent four years with four barrels; no wonder that to many ship owners, whaling is but a losing concern; for it is the harpooneer that makes the voyage, and if you take the breath out of his body how can you expect to find it there when most wanted!

Again, if the dart be successful, then at the second critical instant, that is, when the whale starts to run, the boat-header and harpooneer likewise start to running fore and aft, to the imminent jeopardy of themselves and every one else. It is then they change places; and the headsman, the chief officer of the little craft, takes his proper station in the bows of the boat.

Now, I care not who maintains the contrary, but all this is both foolish and unnecessary. The headsman should stay in the bows from first to last; he should both dart the harpoon and the lance, and no rowing whatever should be expected of him, except under circumstances obvious to any fisherman. I know that this would sometimes involve a slight loss of speed in the chase; but long experience in various whalemen[2] of more than one nation has convinced me that in the vast majority of failures in the fishery, it has not by any means been so much the speed of the whale as the before described exhaustion of the harpooneer that has caused them.

To insure the greatest efficiency in the dart, the harpooneers of this world must start to their feet from out of idleness, and not from out of toil.

1. Demoted (to oarsman).
2. Another reference to Ishmael's later whaling voyages, as in Ch. 45.

CHAPTER 63

THE CROTCH

Out of the trunk, the branches grow; out of them, the twigs. So, in productive subjects, grow the chapters.

The crotch alluded to on a previous page deserves independent mention. It is a notched stick of a peculiar form, some two feet in length, which is perpendicularly inserted into the starboard gunwale near the bow, for the purpose of furnishing a rest for the wooden extremity of the harpoon, whose other naked, barbed end slopingly projects from the prow. Thereby the weapon is instantly at hand to its hurler, who snatches it up as readily from its rest as a backwoodsman swings his rifle from the wall. It is customary to have two harpoons reposing in the crotch, respectively called the first and second irons.

But these two harpoons, each by its own cord, are both connected with the line; the object being this to dart them both, if possible, one instantly after the other into the same whale; so that if, in the coming drag, one should draw out, the other may still retain a hold. It is a doubling of the chances. But it very often happens that owing to the instantaneous, violent, convulsive running of the whale upon receiving the first iron, it becomes impossible for the harpooneer, however lightning-like in his movements, to pitch the second iron into him. Nevertheless, as the second iron is already connected with the line, and the line is running, hence that weapon must, at all events, be anticipatingly tossed out of the boat, somehow and somewhere; else the most terrible jeopardy would involve all hands. Tumbled into the water, it accordingly is in such cases; the spare coils of box line (mentioned in a preceding chapter)[1] making this feat, in most instances, prudently practicable. But this critical act is not always unattended with the saddest and most fatal casualties.

Furthermore: you must know that when the second iron is thrown overboard, it thenceforth becomes a dangling, sharp-edged terror, skittishly curvetting about both boat and whale, entangling the lines, or cutting them, and making a prodigious sensation in all directions. Nor, in general, is it possible to secure it again until the whale is fairly captured and a corpse.

Consider, now, how it must be in the case of four boats all engaging one unusually strong, active, and knowing whale; when owing to these qualities in him, as well as to the thousand concurring accidents of such an audacious enterprise, eight or ten loose second irons may be simultaneously dangling about him. For, of course, each boat is supplied with several harpoons to bend on to the line should the first one be ineffectually darted without recovery. All these particulars are faithfully narrated here, as they will not fail to elucidate several most important, however intricate passages, in scenes hereafter to be painted.

1. Ch. 60.

CHAPTER 64

STUBB'S SUPPER

Stubb's whale had been killed some distance from the ship. It was a calm; so, forming a tandem of three boats, we commenced the slow business of towing the trophy to the Pequod. And now, as we eighteen men with our thirty-six arms, and one hundred and eighty thumbs and fingers, slowly toiled hour after hour upon that inert, sluggish corpse in the sea; and it seemed hardly to budge at all, except at long intervals; good evidence was hereby furnished of the enormousness of the mass we moved. For, upon the great canal of Hang-Ho, or whatever they call it,[1] in China, four or five laborers on the foot-path will draw a bulky freighted junk at the rate of a mile an hour; but this grand argosy we towed heavily forged along, as if laden with pig-lead in bulk.

Darkness came on; but three lights up and down in the Pequod's main-rigging dimly guided our way; till drawing nearer we saw Ahab dropping one of several more lanterns over the bulwarks. Vacantly eyeing the heaving whale for a moment, he issued the usual orders for securing it for the night, and then handing his lantern to a seaman, went his way into the cabin, and did not come forward again until morning.

Though, in overseeing the pursuit of this whale, Captain Ahab had evinced his customary activity, to call it so; yet now that the creature was dead, some vague dissatisfaction, or impatience, or despair, seemed working in him; as if the sight of that dead body reminded him that Moby Dick was yet to be slain; and though a thousand other whales were brought to his ship, all that would not one jot advance his grand, monomaniac object. Very soon you would have thought from the sound on the Pequod's decks, that all hands were preparing to cast anchor in the deep; for heavy chains are being dragged along the deck, and thrust rattling out of the port-holes. But by those clanking links, the vast corpse itself, not the ship, is to be moored. Tied by the head to the stern, and by the tail to the bows, the whale now lies with its black hull close to the vessel's, and seen through the darkness of the night, which obscured the spars and rigging aloft, the two—ship and whale, seemed yoked together like colossal bullocks, whereof one reclines while the other remains standing.[2]

If moody Ahab was now all quiescence, at least so far as could be known on deck, Stubb, his second mate, flushed with conquest, betrayed an unusual but still good-natured excitement. Such an unwonted bustle was he in that the staid Starbuck, his official superior, quietly resigned to him for the time the sole management of affairs. One small, helping cause of

1. Yün-Ho is the Grand Canal. "Hang-Ho" or "Huang-ho" is the Yellow River whose old bed it partly followed.
2. A little item may as well be related here. The strongest and most reliable hold which the ship has upon the whale when moored alongside, is by the flukes or tail; and as from its greater density that part is relatively heavier than any other (excepting the side-fins), its flexibility even in death, causes it to sink low beneath the surface; so that with the hand you cannot get at it from the boat, in order to put the chain round it. But this difficulty is ingeniously overcome; a small, strong line is prepared with a wooden float at its outer end, and a weight in its middle, while the other end is secured to the ship. By adroit management the wooden float is made to rise on the other side of the mass, so that now having girdled the whale, the chain is readily made to follow suit; and being slipped along the body, is at last locked fast round the smallest part of the tail, at the point of junction with its broad flukes or lobes. [Melville's note.]

all this liveliness in Stubb, was soon made strangely manifest. Stubb was a high liver; he was somewhat intemperately fond of the whale as a flavorish thing to his palate.

"A steak, a steak, ere I sleep! You, Daggoo! overboard you go, and cut me one from his small!"

Here be it known, that though these wild fishermen do not, as a general thing, and according to the great military maxim, make the enemy defray the current expenses of the war (at least before realizing the proceeds of the voyage), yet now and then you find some of these Nantucketers who have a genuine relish for that particular part of the Sperm Whale designated by Stubb; comprising the tapering extremity of the body.

About midnight that steak was cut and cooked; and lighted by two lanterns of sperm oil, Stubb stoutly stood up to his spermaceti supper at the capstan-head, as if that capstan[3] were a sideboard. Nor was Stubb the only banqueter on whale's flesh that night. Mingling their mumblings with his own mastications, thousands on thousands of sharks, swarming round the dead leviathan, smackingly feasted on its fatness. The few sleepers below in their bunks were often startled by the sharp slapping of their tails against the hull, within a few inches of the sleepers' hearts. Peering over the side you could just see them (as before you heard them) wallowing in the sullen, black waters, and turning over on their backs as they scooped out huge globular pieces of the whale of the bigness of a human head. This particular feat of the shark seems all but miraculous. How, at such an apparently unassailable surface, they contrive to gouge out such symmetrical mouthfuls, remains a part of the universal problem of all things. The mark they thus leave on the whale, may best be likened to the hollow made by a carpenter in countersinking for a screw.

Though amid all the smoking horror and diabolism of a sea-fight, sharks will be seen longingly gazing up to the ship's decks, like hungry dogs round a table where red meat is being carved, ready to bolt down every killed man that is tossed to them; and though, while the valiant butchers over the deck-table are thus cannibally carving each other's live meat with carving-knives all gilded and tasselled, the sharks, also, with their jewel-hilted mouths, are quarrelsomely carving away under the table at the dead meat; and though, were you to turn the whole affair upside down, it would still be pretty much the same thing, that is to say, a shocking sharkish business enough for all parties; and though sharks also are the invariable outriders of all slave ships crossing the Atlantic, systematically trotting alongside, to be handy in case a parcel is to be carried anywhere, or a dead slave to be decently buried; and though one or two other like instances might be set down, touching the set terms, places, and occasions, when sharks do most socially congregate, and most hilariously feast; yet is there no conceivable time or occasion when you will find them in such countless numbers, and in gayer or more jovial spirits, than around a dead sperm whale, moored by night to a whale-ship at sea. If you have never seen that sight, then suspend your decision about the propriety of devil-worship, and the expediency of conciliating the devil.

But, as yet, Stubb heeded not the mumblings of the banquet that was going on so nigh him, no more than the sharks heeded the smacking of his own epicurean lips.

3. Barrel revolved by bars to lift heavy weights; its head is the flat, circular top.

"Cook, cook!—where's that old Fleece?"[4] he cried at length, widening his legs still further, as if to form a more secure base for his supper; and, at the same time, darting his fork into the dish, as if stabbing with his lance; "cook, you cook!—sail this way, cook!"

The old black, not in any very high glee at having been previously roused from his warm hammock at a most unseasonable hour, came shambling along from his galley, for, like many old blacks, there was something the matter with his knee-pans, which he did not keep well scoured like his other pans; this old Fleece, as they called him, came shuffling and limping along, assisting his step with his tongs, which, after a clumsy fashion, were made of straightened iron hoops; this old Ebony floundered along, and in obedience to the word of command, came to a dead stop on the opposite side of Stubb's sideboard; when, with both hands folded before him, and resting on his two-legged cane, he bowed his arched back still further over, at the same time sideways inclining his head, so as to bring his best ear into play.

"Cook," said Stubb, rapidly lifting a rather reddish morsel to his mouth, "don't you think this steak is rather overdone? You've been beating this steak too much, cook; it's too tender. Don't I always say that to be good, a whale-steak must be tough? There are those sharks now over the side, don't you see they prefer it tough and rare? What a shindy they are kicking up! Cook, go and talk to 'em; tell 'em they are welcome to help themselves civilly, and in moderation, but they must keep quiet. Blast me, if I can hear my own voice. Away, cook, and deliver my message. Here, take this lantern," snatching one from his sideboard; "now then, go and preach to 'em!"

Sullenly taking the offered lantern, old Fleece limped across the deck to the bulwarks; and then, with one hand dropping his light low over the sea, so as to get a good view of his congregation, with the other hand he solemnly flourished his tongs, and leaning far over the side in a mumbling voice began addressing the sharks, while Stubb, softly crawling behind, overheard all that was said.

"Fellow-critters: I'se ordered here to say dat you must stop dat dam noise dare. You hear? Stop dat dam smackin' ob de lip! Massa Stubb say dat you can fill your dam bellies up to de hatchings, but by Gor! you must stop dat dam racket!"

"Cook," here interposed Stubb, accompanying the word with a sudden slap on the shoulder,—"Cook! why, damn your eyes, you mustn't swear that way when you're preaching. That's no way to convert sinners, Cook!"

"Who dat? Den preach to him yourself," sullenly turning to go.

"No, Cook; go on, go on."

"Well, den, Belubed fellow-critters:"—

"Right!" exclaimed Stubb, approvingly, "coax 'em to it; try that," and Fleece continued.

"Dough you is all sharks, and by natur wery woracious, yet I zay to you, fellow-critters, dat dat woraciousness—'top dat dam slappin' ob de tail! How you tink to hear, 'spose you keep up such a dam slappin' and bitin' dare?"

"Cook," cried Stubb, collaring him, "I wont have that swearing. Talk to 'em gentlemanly."

Once more the sermon proceeded.

"Your woraciousness, fellow-critters, I don't blame ye so much for; dat is natur, and can't be helped; but to gobern dat wicked natur, dat is de

4. The job of sea cooks, as on the *Pequod*, often went to black men.

pint. You is sharks, sartin; but if you gobern de shark in you, why den you be angel; for all angel is not'ing more dan de shark well goberned. Now, look here, bred'ren, just try wonst to be cibil, a helping yourselbs from dat whale. Don't be tearin' de blubber out your neighbour's mout, I say. Is not one shark dood right as toder to dat whale? And, by Gor, none on you has de right to dat whale; dat whale belong to some one else. I know some o' you has berry brig mout, brigger dan oders; but den de brig mouts sometimes has de small bellies; so dat de brigness ob de mout is not to swallar wid, but to bite off de blubber for de small fry ob sharks, dat can't get into de scrouge to help demselves."

"Well done, old Fleece!" cried Stubb, "that's Christianity; go on."

"No use goin' on; de dam willains will keep a scrougin' and slappin' each oder, Massa Stubb; dey don't hear one word; no use a-preachin' to such dam g'uttons as you call 'em, till dare bellies is full, and dare bellies is bottomless; and when dey do get 'em full, dey wont hear you den; for den dey sink in de sea, go fast to sleep on de coral, and can't hear not'ing at all, no more, for eber and eber."

"Upon my soul, I am about of the same opinion; so give the benediction, Fleece, and I'll away to my supper."

Upon this, Fleece, holding both hands over the fishy mob, raised his shrill voice, and cried—

"Cussed fellow-critters! Kick up de damndest row as ever you can; fill your dam' bellies till dey bust—and den die."

"Now, cook," said Stubb, resuming his supper at the capstan; "Stand just where you stood before, there, over against me, and pay particular attention."

"All 'dention," said Fleece, again stooping over upon his tongs in the desired position.

"Well," said Stubb, helping himself freely meanwhile; "I shall now go back to the subject of this steak. In the first place, how old are you, cook?"

"What dat do wid de 'teak," said the old black, testily.

"Silence! How old are you, cook?"

"'Bout ninety, dey say," he gloomily muttered.

"And have you lived in this world hard upon one hundred years, cook, and don't know yet how to cook a whale-steak?" rapidly bolting another mouthful at the last word, so that that morsel seemed a continuation of the question. "Where were you born, cook?"

"'Hind de hatchway, in ferry-boat, goin' ober de Roanoke."[5]

"Born in a ferry-boat! That's queer, too. But I want to know what country you were born in, cook?"

"Didn't I say de Roanoke country?" he cried, sharply.

"No, you didn't, cook; but I'll tell you what I'm coming to, cook. You must go home and be born over again; you don't know how to cook a whale-steak yet."

"Bress my soul, if I cook 'noder one," he growled, angrily, turning round to depart.

"Come back, cook;—here, hand me those tongs;—now take that bit of steak there, and tell me if you think that steak cooked as it should be? Take it, I say"—holding the tongs towards him—"take it, and taste it."

5. River running southeast from central Virginia into North Carolina.

Faintly smacking his withered lips over it for a moment, the old negro muttered, "Best cooked 'teak I eber taste; joosy, berry joosy."

"Cook," said Stubb, squaring himself once more; "do you belong to the church?"

"Passed one once in Cape-Down,"[6] said the old man sullenly.

"And you have once in your life passed a holy church in Cape-Town, where you doubtless overheard a holy parson addressing his hearers as his beloved fellow-creatures, have you, cook! And yet you come here, and tell me such a dreadful lie as you did just now, eh?" said Stubb. "Where do you expect to go to, cook?"

"Go to bed berry soon," he mumbled, half-turning as he spoke.

"Avast! heave to! I mean when you die, cook. It's an awful question. Now what's your answer?"

"When dis old brack man dies," said the negro slowly, changing his whole air and demeanor, "he hisself won't go nowhere; but some bressed angel will come and fetch him."

"Fetch him? How? In a coach and four, as they fetched Elijah?[7] And fetch him where?"

"Up dere," said Fleece, holding his tongs straight over his head, and keeping it there very solemnly.

"So, then, you expect to go up into our main-top, do you, cook, when you are dead? But don't you know the higher you climb, the colder it gets? Main-top eh?"

"Didn't say dat 'tall," said Fleece, again in the sulks.

"You said up there, didn't you? and now look yourself, and see where your tongs are pointing. But, perhaps you expect to get into heaven by crawling through the lubber's hole,[8] cook; but, no, no, cook, you don't get there, except you go the regular way, round by the rigging. It's a ticklish business, but must be done, or else it's no go. But none of us are in heaven yet. Drop your tongs, cook, and hear my orders. Do ye hear? Hold your hat in one hand, and clap t'other a'top of your heart, when I'm giving my orders, cook. What! that your heart, there?—that's your gizzard! Aloft! aloft!—that's it—now you have it. Hold it there now, and pay attention."

"All 'dention," said the old black, with both hands placed as desired, vainly wriggling his grizzled head, as if to get both ears in front at one and the same time.

"Well then, cook, you see this whale-steak of yours was so very bad, that I have put it out of sight as soon as possible; you see that, don't you? Well, for the future, when you cook another whale-steak for my private table here, the capstan, I'll tell you what to do so as not to spoil it by overdoing. Hold the steak in one hand, and show a live coal to it with the other; that done, dish it; d'ye hear? And now to-morrow, cook, when we are cutting in the fish, be sure you stand by to get the tips of his fins; have them put in pickle. As for the ends of the flukes, have them soused,[9] cook. There, now ye may go."

But Fleece had hardly got three paces off, when he was recalled.

6. Cape Town, the South African seaport.
7. See 2 Kings 2.11: "Behold, there appeared a chariot of fire, and horses of fire, . . . and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven."
8. The hole in the floor of the maintop that only timorous, clumsy sailors ("lubbers") crawled through to get to the top; the real sailors boldly climbed over the outside edge.
9. Pickled in salt.

"Cook, give me cutlets for supper to-morrow night in the mid-watch. D'ye hear? away you sail, then.—Halloa! stop! make a bow before you go.—Avast heaving again! Whale-balls for breakfast—don't forget."

"Wish, by gor! whale eat him, 'stead of him eat whale. I'm bressed if he ain't more of shark dan Massa Shark hisself," muttered the old man, limping away; with which sage ejaculation he went to his hammock.

CHAPTER 65

THE WHALE AS A DISH

That mortal man should feed upon the creature that feeds his lamp, and, like Stubb, eat him by his own light, as you may say; this seems so outlandish a thing that one must needs go a little into the history and philosophy of it.

It is upon record, that three centuries ago the tongue of the Right Whale was esteemed a great delicacy in France, and commanded large prices there.[1] Also, that in Henry VIIIth's time, a certain cook of the court obtained a handsome reward for inventing an admirable sauce to be eaten with barbacued porpoises, which, you remember, are a species of whale. Porpoises, indeed, are to this day considered fine eating. The meat is made into balls about the size of billiard balls, and being well seasoned and spiced might be taken for turtle-balls or veal balls. The old monks of Dunfermline were very fond of them. They had a great porpoise grant from the crown.

The fact is, that among his hunters at least, the whale would by all hands be considered a noble dish, were there not so much of him; but when you come to sit down before a meat-pie nearly one hundred feet long, it takes away your appetite. Only the most unprejudiced of men like Stubb, nowadays partake of cooked whales; but the Esquimaux are not so fastidious. We all know how they live upon whales, and have rare old vintages of prime old train oil. Zogranda,[2] one of their most famous doctors, recommends strips of blubber for infants, as being exceedingly juicy and nourishing. And this reminds me that certain Englishmen, who long ago were accidentally left in Greenland by a whaling vessel—that these men actually lived for several months on the mouldy scraps of whales which had been left ashore after trying out the blubber. Among the Dutch whalemen these scraps are called "fritters;"—which, indeed, they greatly resemble, being brown and crisp, and smelling something like old Amsterdam housewives' dough-nuts or oly-cooks, when fresh. They have such an eatable look that the most self-denying stranger can hardly keep his hands off.

But what further depreciates the whale as a civilized dish, is his exceeding richness. He is the great prize ox of the sea, too fat to be delicately good. Look at his hump, which would be as fine eating as the buffalo's (which is esteemed a rare dish), were it not such a solid pyramid of fat. But the spermaceti itself, how bland and creamy that is; like the transparent, half-jellied, white meat of a cocoanut in the third month of its growth, yet far too rich to supply a substitute for butter. Nevertheless, many

1. Mansfield and Vincent (757) show that Melville found this item in Scoresby (1820, II, 14) and the item on Henry VIII's time and the Monks of Dunfermline (an abbey near Edinburgh) in Robert Sibbald's *History . . . of Fife and Kinross* (1710), cited in "Extracts" (on p. 10 herein).
2. Another of Melville's private jokes at Scoresby's expense.

whalemen have a method of absorbing it into some other substance, and then partaking of it. In the long try watches of the night it is a common thing for the seamen to dip their ship-biscuit into the huge oil-pots and let them fry there awhile. Many a good supper have I thus made.

In the case of a small Sperm Whale the brains are accounted a fine dish. The casket of the skull is broken into with an axe, and the two plump, whitish lobes being withdrawn (precisely resembling two large puddings), they are then mixed with flour, and cooked into a most delectable mess, in flavor somewhat resembling calves' head, which is quite a dish among some epicures; and every one knows that some young bucks among the epicures, by continually dining upon calves' brains, by and by get to have a little brains of their own, so as to be able to tell a calf's head from their own heads; which, indeed, requires uncommon discrimination. And that is the reason why a young buck with an intelligent looking calf's head before him, is somehow one of the saddest sights you can see. The head looks a sort of reproachfully at him, with an "Et tu Brute!"[3] expression.

It is not, perhaps, entirely because the whale is so excessively unctuous that landsmen seem to regard the eating of him with abhorrence; that appears to result, in some way, from the consideration before mentioned: i.e. that a man should eat a newly murdered thing of the sea, and eat it too by its own light. But no doubt the first man that ever murdered an ox was regarded as a murderer; perhaps he was hung; and if he had been put on his trial by oxen, he certainly would have been; and he certainly deserved it if any murderer does. Go to the meat-market of a Saturday night and see the crowds of live bipeds staring up at the long rows of dead quadrupeds. Does not that sight take a tooth out of the cannibal's jaw? Cannibals? who is not a cannibal? I tell you it will be more tolerable for the Fejee that salted down a lean missionary in his cellar against a coming famine; it will be more tolerable for that provident Fejee, I say, in the day of judgment, than for thee, civilized and enlightened gourmand, who nailest geese to the ground and feastest on their bloated livers in thy paté-de-foie-gras.[4]

But Stubb, he eats the whale by its own light, does he? and that is adding insult to injury, is it? Look at your knife-handle, there, my civilized and enlightened gourmand dining off that roast beef, what is that handle made of?—what but the bones of the brother of the very ox you are eating? And what do you pick your teeth with, after devouring that fat goose? With a feather of the same fowl. And with what quill did the Secretary of the Society for the Suppression of Cruelty to Ganders formerly indite his circulars?[5] It is only within the last month or two that that society passed a resolution to patronize nothing but steel pens.

3. "And also you, Brutus": Julius Cæsar's dying reproach to his friend Brutus, one of his assassins (*Julius Caesar* 3.1.77).
4. Matthew 10.15: "I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment, than for that city" (any city that refuses to hear Jesus' message). The pâté is a delicacy achieved by cruel torture, made from the liver of a goose fattened in the way described.
5. One of Melville's invented high-sounding do-good societies. The 1967 NCE introduced the emendation "formerly" for "formally."

CHAPTER 66

THE SHARK MASSACRE

When in the Southern Fishery, a captured Sperm Whale, after long and weary toil, is brought alongside late at night, it is not, as a general thing at least, customary to proceed at once to the business of cutting him in. For that business is an exceedingly laborious one; is not very soon completed; and requires all hands to set about it. Therefore, the common usage is to take in all sail; lash the helm a'lee; and then send every one below to his hammock till daylight, with the reservation that, until that time, anchor-watches shall be kept; that is, two and two, for an hour each couple, the crew in rotation shall mount the deck to see that all goes well.

But sometimes, especially upon the Line in the Pacific, this plan will not answer at all; because such incalculable hosts of sharks gather round the moored carcase, that were he left so for six hours, say, on a stretch, little more than the skeleton would be visible by morning. In most other parts of the ocean, however, where these fish do not so largely abound, their wondrous voracity can be at times considerably diminished, by vigorously stirring them up with sharp whaling-spades, a procedure notwithstanding, which, in some instances, only seems to tickle them into still greater activity. But it was not thus in the present case with the Pequod's sharks; though, to be sure, any man unaccustomed to such sights, to have looked over her side that night, would have almost thought the whole round sea was one huge cheese, and those sharks the maggots in it.

Nevertheless, upon Stubb setting the anchor-watch after his supper was concluded; and when, accordingly, Queequeg and a forecastle seaman came on deck, no small excitement was created among the sharks; for immediately suspending the cutting stages[1] over the side, and lowering three lanterns, so that they cast long gleams of light over the turbid sea, these two mariners, darting their long whaling-spades, kept up an incessant murdering of the sharks,[2] by striking the keen steel deep into their skulls, seemingly their only vital part. But in the foamy confusion of their mixed and struggling hosts, the marksmen could not always hit their mark; and this brought about new revelations of the incredible ferocity of the foe. They viciously snapped, not only at each other's disembowelments, but like flexible bows, bent round, and bit their own; till those entrails seemed swallowed over and over again by the same mouth, to be oppositely voided by the gaping wound. Nor was this all. It was unsafe to meddle with the corpses and ghosts of these creatures. A sort of generic or Pantheistic vitality[3] seemed to lurk in their very joints and bones, after what might be

1. Precarious platform fastened to the side of the ship, from which men loosen strips of blubber from the dead whale. See the illustrations on pp. 444 and 452 herein.
2. The whaling-spade used for cutting-in is made of the very best steel; is about the bigness of a man's spread hand; and in general shape, corresponds to the garden implement after which it is named; only its sides are perfectly flat, and its upper end considerably narrower than the lower. This weapon is always kept as sharp as possible; and when being used is occasionally honed, just like a razor. In its socket, a stiff pole, from twenty to thirty feet long, is inserted for a handle. [Melville's note.]
3. Natural life force. Queequeg's speech below attributes the shark's making to some god outside nature who is malignant as an Indian, the god being "one dam Injin," the South Sea "savage" ironically learning from exposure to "civilization" and echoing an extreme white attitude toward American Indians.

called the individual life had departed. Killed and hoisted on deck for the sake of his skin, one of these sharks almost took poor Queequeg's hand off, when he tried to shut down the dead lid of his murderous jaw.

"Queequeg no care what god made him shark," said the savage, agonizingly lifting his hand up and down; "wedder Fejee god or Nantucket god; but de god wat made shark must be one dam Ingin."

CHAPTER 67

CUTTING IN

It was a Saturday night, and such a Sabbath as followed! Ex officio[1] professors of Sabbath breaking are all whalemen. The ivory Pequod was turned into what seemed a shamble; every sailor a butcher. You would have thought we were offering up[2] ten thousand red oxen to the sea gods.

In the first place, the enormous cutting tackles, among other ponderous things comprising a cluster of blocks generally painted green, and which no single man can possibly lift—this vast bunch of grapes was swayed up to the main-top and firmly lashed to the lower mast-head, the strongest point anywhere above a ship's deck. The end of the hawser-like rope winding through these intricacies, was then conducted to the windlass, and the huge lower block of the tackles was swung over the whale; to this block the great blubber hook, weighing some one hundred pounds, was attached. And now suspended in stages over the side, Starbuck and Stubb, the mates, armed with their long spades, began cutting a hole in the body for the insertion of the hook just above the nearest of the two side-fins. This done, a broad, semicircular line is cut round the hole, the hook is inserted, and the main body of the crew striking up a wild chorus, now commence heaving in one dense crowd at the windlass. When instantly, the entire ship careens over on her side; every bolt in her starts like the nail-heads of an old house in frosty weather; she trembles, quivers, and nods her frighted mast-heads to the sky. More and more she leans over to the whale, while every gasping heave of the windlass is answered by a helping heave from the billows; till at last, a swift, startling snap is heard; with a great swash the ship rolls upwards and backwards from the whale, and the triumphant tackle rises into sight dragging after it the disengaged semicircular end of the first strip of blubber. Now as the blubber envelopes the whale precisely as the rind does an orange, so is it stripped off from the body precisely as an orange is sometimes stripped by spiralizing it. For the strain constantly kept up by the windlass continually keeps the whale rolling over and over in the water, and as the blubber in one strip uniformly peels off along the line called the "scarf," simultaneously cut by the spades of Starbuck and Stubb, the mates; and just as fast as it is thus peeled off, and indeed by that very act itself, it is all the time being hoisted higher and higher aloft till its upper end grazes the main-top; the men at the windlass then cease heaving, and for a moment or two the prodigious blood-dripping mass sways to and fro as if let down from the sky,

1. I.e., their occupation requires that they break the commandment against working on the Sabbath (Exodus 21.8).
2. Sacrificing to some god. "Shamble": or shambles; a slaughterhouse.

and every one present must take good heed to dodge it when it swings, else it may box his ears and pitch him headlong overboard.

One of the attending harpooneers now advances with a long, keen weapon called a boarding-sword, and watching his chance he dexterously slices out a considerable hole in the lower part of the swaying mass. Into this hole, the end of the second alternating great tackle is then hooked so as to retain a hold upon the blubber, in order to prepare for what follows. Whereupon, this accomplished swordsman, warning all hands to stand off, once more makes a scientific dash at the mass, and with a few sidelong, desperate, lunging slicings, severs it completely in twain; so that while the short lower part is still fast, the long upper strip, called a blanket-piece, swings clear, and is all ready for lowering. The heavers forward now resume their song, and while the one tackle is peeling and hoisting a second strip from the whale, the other is slowly slackened away, and down goes the first strip through the main hatchway right beneath, into an unfurnished parlor called the blubber-room. Into this twilight apartment sundry nimble hands keep coiling away the long blanket-piece as if it were a great live mass of plaited serpents. And thus the work proceeds; the two tackles hoisting and lowering simultaneously; both whale and windlass heaving, the heavers singing, the blubber-room gentlemen coiling, the mates scarfing, the ship straining, and all hands swearing occasionally, by way of assuaging the general friction.

CHAPTER 68

THE BLANKET

I have given no small attention to that not unvexed subject, the skin of the whale. I have had controversies about it with experienced whalemen afloat, and learned naturalists ashore. My original opinion remains unchanged; but it is only an opinion.

The question is, what and where is the skin of the whale? Already you know what his blubber is. That blubber is something of the consistence of firm, close-grained beef, but tougher, more elastic and compact, and ranges from eight or ten to twelve and fifteen inches in thickness.

Now, however preposterous it may at first seem to talk of any creature's skin as being of that sort of consistence and thickness, yet in point of fact these are no arguments against such a presumption; because you cannot raise any other dense enveloping layer from the whale's body but that same blubber; and the outermost enveloping layer of any animal, if reasonably dense, what can that be but the skin? True, from the unmarred dead body of the whale, you may scrape off with your hand an infinitely thin, transparent substance, somewhat resembling the thinnest shreds of isinglass,[1] only it is almost as flexible and soft as satin; that is, previous to being dried, when it not only contracts and thickens, but becomes rather hard and brittle. I have several such dried bits, which I use for marks in my whalebooks. It is transparent, as I said before; and being laid upon the printed page, I have sometimes pleased myself with fancying it exerted a magnifying influence. At any rate, it is pleasant to read about whales through their own

1. Thin pieces of mica.

spectacles, as you may say. But what I am driving at here is this. That same infinitely thin, isinglass substance, which, I admit, invests the entire body of the whale, is not so much to be regarded as the skin of the creature, as the skin of the skin, so to speak; for it were simply ridiculous to say, that the proper skin of the tremendous whale is thinner and more tender than the skin of a new-born child. But no more of this.

Assuming the blubber to be the skin of the whale; then, when this skin, as in the case of a very large Sperm Whale, will yield the bulk of one hundred barrels of oil; and, when it is considered that, in quantity, or rather weight, that oil, in its expressed state, is only three fourths, and not the entire substance of the coat; some idea may hence be had of the enormousness of that animated mass, a mere part of whose mere integument yields such a lake of liquid as that. Reckoning ten barrels to the ton, you have ten tons for the net weight of only three quarters of the stuff of the whale's skin.

In life, the visible surface of the Sperm Whale is not the least among the many marvels he presents. Almost invariably it is all over obliquely crossed and re-crossed with numberless straight marks in thick array, something like those in the finest Italian line engravings. But these marks do not seem to be impressed upon the isinglass substance above mentioned, but seem to be seen through it, as if they were engraved upon the body itself. Nor is this all. In some instances, to the quick, observant eye, those linear marks, as in a veritable engraving, but afford the ground for far other delineations. These are hieroglyphical; that is, if you call those mysterious cyphers on the walls of pyramids hieroglyphics, then that is the proper word to use in the present connexion. By my retentive memory of the hieroglyphics upon one Sperm Whale in particular, I was much struck with a plate representing the old Indian characters chiselled on the famous hieroglyphic palisades on the banks of the Upper Mississippi.[2] Like those mystic rocks, too, the mystic-marked whale remains undecipherable. This allusion to the Indian rocks reminds me of another thing. Besides all the other phenomena which the exterior of the Sperm Whale presents, he not seldom displays the back, and more especially his flanks, effaced in great part of the regular linear appearance, by reason of numerous rude scratches, altogether of an irregular, random aspect. I should say that those New England rocks on the sea-coast, which Agassiz[3] imagines to bear the marks of violent scraping contact with vast floating icebergs—I should say, that those rocks must not a little resemble the Sperm Whale in this particular. It also seems to me that such scratches in the whale are probably made by hostile contact with other whales; for I have most remarked them in the large, full-grown bulls of the species.

A word or two more concerning this matter of the skin or blubber of the whale. It has already been said, that it is stript from him in long pieces, called blanket-pieces. Like most sea-terms, this one is very happy and significant. For the whale is indeed wrapt up in his blubber as in a real blanket or counterpane; or, still better, an Indian poncho slipt over his head, and skirting his extremity. It is by reason of this cosy blanketing of his body, that the whale is enabled to keep himself comfortable in all weathers,

2. Hieroglyphics near Alton, Illinois, shaped somewhat like a great bird. Melville may have seen them in 1840, before they were destroyed by quarrying.
3. Louis Agassiz (1807–1873), eminent Swiss-born naturalist and geologist, professor at Harvard 1848–73.

in all seas, times, and tides. What would become of a Greenland whale, say, in those shuddering, icy seas of the North, if unsupplied with his cosy surtout? True, other fish are found exceedingly brisk in those Hyperborean[4] waters; but these, be it observed, are your cold-blooded, lungless fish, whose very bellies are refrigerators; creatures, that warm themselves under the lee of an iceberg, as a traveller in winter would bask before an inn fire; whereas, like man, the whale has lungs and warm blood. Freeze his blood, and he dies. How wonderful is it then—except after explanation—that this great monster, to whom corporeal warmth is as indispensable as it is to man; how wonderful that he should be found at home, immersed to his lips for life in those Arctic waters! where, when seamen fall overboard, they are sometimes found, months afterwards, perpendicularly frozen into the hearts of fields of ice, as a fly is found glued in amber. But more surprising is it to know, as has been proved by experiment, that the blood of a Polar whale is warmer than that of a Borneo negro[5] in summer.

It does seem to me, that herein we see the rare virtue of a strong individual vitality, and the rare virtue of thick walls, and the rare virtue of interior spaciousness. Oh, man! admire and model thyself after the whale! Do thou, too, remain warm among ice. Do thou, too, live in this world without being of it. Be cool at the equator; keep thy blood fluid at the Pole. Like the great dome of St. Peter's,[6] and like the great whale, retain, O man! in all seasons a temperature of thine own.

But how easy and how hopeless to teach these fine things! Of erections, how few are domed like St. Peter's! of creatures, how few vast as the whale!

CHAPTER 69

THE FUNERAL

"Haul in the chains! Let the carcase go astern!"

The vast tackles have now done their duty. The peeled white body of the beheaded whale flashes like a marble sepulchre; though changed in hue, it has not perceptibly lost anything in bulk. It is still colossal. Slowly it floats more and more away, the water round it torn and splashed by the insatiate sharks, and the air above vexed with rapacious flights of screaming fowls, whose beaks are like so many insulting poniards in the whale. The vast white headless phantom floats further and further from the ship, and every rod that it so floats, what seem square roods of sharks and cubic roods of fowls, augment the murderous din. For hours and hours from the almost stationary ship that hideous sight is seen. Beneath the unclouded and mild azure sky, upon the fair face of the pleasant sea, wafted by the joyous breezes, that great mass of death floats on and on, till lost in infinite perspectives.

There's a most doleful and most mocking funeral! The sea-vultures all in pious mourning, the air-sharks all punctiliously in black or speckled. In life but few of them would have helped the whale, I ween, if peradventure he

4. Icy, as in the mythological region beyond the home of the North Wind, sometimes (but not here) imagined as warm and sunny.
5. Dark-skinned native of this Malayan island.
6. Melville may have read about the constant temperature of this great basilica in Rome in Madame de Staël's *Corrine* (1807), which he bought in London in 1849.

had needed it; but upon the banquet of his funeral they most piously do pounce. Oh, horrible vultureism of earth! from which not the mightiest whale is free.

Nor is this the end. Desecrated as the body is, a vengeful ghost survives and hovers over it to scare. Espied by some timid man-of-war or blundering discovery-vessel from afar, when the distance obscuring the swarming fowls, nevertheless still shows the white mass floating in the sun, and the white spray heaving high against it; straightway the whale's unharming corpse, with trembling fingers is set down in the log—*shoals, rocks, and breakers hereabouts: beware!* And for years afterwards, perhaps, ships shun the place; leaping over it as silly sheep leap over a vacuum, because their leader originally leaped there when a stick was held. There's your law of precedents; there's your utility of traditions; there's the story of your obstinate survival of old beliefs never bottomed on the earth, and now not even hovering in the air! There's orthodoxy!

Thus, while in life the great whale's body may have been a real terror to his foes, in his death his ghost becomes a powerless panic to a world.

Are you a believer in ghosts, my friend? There are other ghosts than the Cock-Lane one, and far deeper men than Doctor Johnson who believe in them.[7]

CHAPTER 70

THE SPHYNX

It should not have been omitted that previous to completely stripping the body of the leviathan, he was beheaded. Now, the beheading of the Sperm Whale is a scientific anatomical feat, upon which experienced whale surgeons very much pride themselves: and not without reason.

Consider that the whale has nothing that can properly be called a neck; on the contrary, where his head and body seem to join, there, in that very place, is the thickest part of him. Remember, also, that the surgeon must operate from above, some eight or ten feet intervening between him and his subject, and that subject almost hidden in a discolored, rolling, and oftentimes tumultuous and bursting sea. Bear in mind, too, that under these untoward circumstances he has to cut many feet deep in the flesh; and in that subterraneous manner, without so much as getting one single peep into the ever-contracting gash thus made, he must skilfully steer clear of all adjacent, interdicted parts, and exactly divide the spine at a critical point hard by its insertion into the skull. Do you not marvel, then, at Stubb's boast, that he demanded but ten minutes to behead a sperm whale?

When first severed, the head is dropped astern and held there by a cable till the body is stripped. That done, if it belong to a small whale it is hoisted on deck to be deliberately disposed of. But, with a full grown leviathan this is impossible; for the sperm whale's head embraces nearly one third of his entire bulk, and completely to suspend such a burden as that, even by the immense tackles of a whaler, this were as vain a thing as to attempt weighing a Dutch barn in jewellers' scales.

7. Samuel Johnson in fact exposed the faked ghost in London's Cock-Lane in 1762.

The Pequod's whale being decapitated and the body stripped, the head was hoisted against the ship's side—about half way out of the sea, so that it might yet in great part be buoyed up by its native element. And there with the strained craft steeply leaning over to it, by reason of the enormous downward drag from the lower mast-head, and every yard-arm on that side projecting like a crane over the waves; there, that blood-dripping head hung to the Pequod's waist like the giant Holofernes's from the girdle of Judith.[1]

When this last task was accomplished it was noon, and the seamen went below to their dinner. Silence reigned over the before tumultuous but now deserted deck. An intense copper calm, like a universal yellow lotus, was more and more unfolding its noiseless measureless leaves upon the sea.

A short space elapsed, and up into this noiselessness came Ahab alone from his cabin. Taking a few turns on the quarterdeck, he paused to gaze over the side, then slowly getting into the main-chains he took Stubb's long spade—still remaining there after the whale's decapitation—and striking it into the lower part of the half-suspended mass, placed its other end crutch-wise under one arm, and so stood leaning over with eyes attentively fixed on this head.

It was a black and hooded head; and hanging there in the midst of so intense a calm, it seemed the Sphynx's in the desert. "Speak, thou vast and venerable head," muttered Ahab, "which, though ungarnished with a beard, yet here and there lookest hoary with mosses; speak, mighty head, and tell us the secret thing that is in thee. Of all divers, thou hast dived the deepest. That head upon which the upper sun now gleams, has moved amid this world's foundations. Where unrecorded names and navies rust, and untold hopes and anchors rot; where in her murderous hold this frigate earth is ballasted with bones of millions of the drowned; there, in that awful water-land, there was thy most familiar home. Thou hast been where bell or diver never went; hast slept by many a sailor's side, where sleepless mothers would give their lives to lay them down. Thou saw'st the locked lovers when leaping from their flaming ship; heart to heart they sank beneath the exulting wave; true to each other, when heaven seemed false to them. Thou saw'st the murdered mate when tossed by pirates from the midnight deck; for hours he fell into the deeper midnight of the insatiate maw; and his murderers still sailed on unharmed—while swift lightnings shivered the neighboring ship that would have borne a righteous husband to outstretched, longing arms. O head! thou hast seen enough to split the planets and make an infidel of Abraham,[2] and not one syllable is thine!"

"Sail ho!" cried a triumphant voice from the main-mast-head.

"Aye? Well, now, that's cheering," cried Ahab, suddenly erecting himself, while whole thunder-clouds swept aside from his brow. "That lively cry upon this deadly calm might almost convert a better man.—Where away?"

"Three points on the starboard bow, sir, and bringing down her breeze to us!"

1. This Jewish heroine in the apocryphal book of Judith decapitates the Assyrian general Holofernes with his own sword. Judith's maid carries the head home in her "bag of meat" (13.10), her food bag, not hanging from Judith's beltlike girdle as pictured by some Renaissance artists.
2. The horrors the head has seen could make even the father of the Jewish people lose faith in God's ways.

"Better and better, man. Would now St. Paul would come along that way, and to my breezelessness bring his breeze![3] O Nature, and O soul of man! how far beyond all utterance are your linked analogies! not the smallest atom stirs or lives in matter, but has its cunning duplicate in mind."

CHAPTER 71

THE JEROBOAM'S STORY[1]

Hand in hand, ship and breeze blew on; but the breeze came faster than the ship, and soon the Pequod began to rock.

By and by, through the glass the stranger's boats and manned mast-heads proved her a whale-ship. But as she was so far to windward, and shooting by, apparently making a passage to some other ground, the Pequod could not hope to reach her. So the signal was set to see what response would be made.

Here be it said, that like the vessels of military marines, the ships of the American Whale Fleet have each a private signal; all which signals being collected in a book with the names of the respective vessels attached, every captain is provided with it. Thereby, the whale commanders are enabled to recognise each other upon the ocean, even at considerable distances, and with no small facility.

The Pequod's signal was at last responded to by the stranger's setting her own; which proved the ship to be the Jeroboam of Nantucket. Squaring her yards, she bore down, ranged abeam under the Pequod's lee, and lowered a boat; it soon drew nigh; but, as the side-ladder was being rigged by Starbuck's order to accommodate the visiting captain, the stranger in question waved his hand from his boat's stern in token of that proceeding being entirely unnecessary. It turned out that the Jeroboam had a malignant epidemic on board, and that Mayhew, her captain, was fearful of infecting the Pequod's company. For, though himself and boat's crew remained untainted, and though his ship was half a rifle-shot off, and an incorruptible sea and air rolling and flowing between; yet conscientiously adhering to the timid quarantine of the land, he peremptorily refused to come into direct contact with the Pequod.

But this did by no means prevent all communication. Preserving an interval of some few yards between itself and the ship, the Jeroboam's boat by the occasional use of its oars contrived to keep parallel to the Pequod, as she heavily forged through the sea (for by this time it blew very fresh), with her main-top-sail aback; though, indeed, at times by the sudden onset of a large rolling wave, the boat would be pushed some way ahead; but would be soon skilfully brought to her proper bearings again. Subject to this, and other the like interruptions now and then, a conversation was sustained between the two parties; but at intervals not without still another interruption of a very different sort.

Pulling an oar in the Jeroboam's boat, was a man of a singular appearance, even in that wild whaling life where individual notabilities make

3. This story (alluded to in Ch. 2) is in Acts 27.

1. The ship from Quaker Nantucket oddly takes its name from Jeroboam, the wicked king of Israel who worshiped golden calves (2 Chronicles 13.8).

up all totalities. He was a small, short, youngish man, sprinkled all over his face with freckles, and wearing redundant yellow hair. A long-skirted, cabalistically-cut coat of a faded walnut tinge enveloped him;[2] the overlapping sleeves of which were rolled up on his wrists. A deep, settled, fanatic delirium was in his eyes.

So soon as this figure had been first descried, Stubb had exclaimed—"That's he! that's he!—the long-togged scaramouch[3] the Town-Ho's company told us of!" Stubb here alluded to a strange story told of the Jeroboam, and a certain man among her crew, some time previous when the Pequod spoke the Town-Ho. According to this account and what was subsequently learned, it seemed that the scaramouch in question had gained a wonderful ascendency over almost everybody in the Jeroboam. His story was this:

He had been originally nurtured among the crazy society of Neskyeuna Shakers,[4] where he had been a great prophet; in their cracked, secret meetings having several times descended from heaven by the way of a trap-door, announcing the speedy opening of the seventh vial,[5] which he carried in his vest-pocket; but, which, instead of containing gunpowder, was supposed to be charged with laudanum.[6] A strange, apostolic whim having seized him, he had left Neskyeuna for Nantucket, where, with that cunning peculiar to craziness, he assumed a steady, common sense exterior, and offered himself as a green-hand candidate for the Jeroboam's whaling voyage. They engaged him; but straightway upon the ship's getting out of sight of land, his insanity broke out in a freshet. He announced himself as the archangel Gabriel,[7] and commanded the captain to jump overboard. He published his manifesto, whereby he set himself forth as the deliverer of the isles of the sea and vicar-general[8] of all Oceanica. The unflinching earnestness with which he declared these things;—the dark, daring play of his sleepless, excited imagination, and all the preternatural terrors of real delirium, united to invest this Gabriel in the minds of the majority of the ignorant crew, with an atmosphere of sacredness. Moreover, they were afraid of him. As such a man, however, was not of much practical use in the ship, especially as he refused to work except when he pleased, the incredulous captain would fain have been rid of him; but apprised that that individual's intention was to land him in the first convenient port, the archangel forthwith opened all his seals and vials—devoting the ship and all hands to unconditional perdition, in case this intention was carried out. So strongly did he work upon his disciples among the crew, that at last in a body they went to the captain and told him if Gabriel was sent from the ship, not a man of them would remain. He was therefore forced to relinquish his plan.

2. The edges of the cloth (and perhaps the body of the cloth also) are not straight but cut in fantastic shapes, like esoteric symbols.
3. Boastful, cowardly buffoon in the Italian commedia dell'arte.
4. A Shaker community near Albany, New York, familiar to Melville, as was the one at Hancock, Massachusetts, a few miles from his Pittsfield home, which he visited as a tourist attraction to see the dancing, to admire the great Round Barn, and to buy small gifts, such as baskets. He took some details from *A Summary View of the Millennial Church, or United Society of Believers, Commonly Called Shakers* (1848).
5. In Revelation 16.17, the last of the vials of wrath poured out by the angels at the place called Armageddon.
6. A tincture of opium.
7. The strange young man is not only called Gabriel, the name of one of the archangels, but identifies himself *as* the archangel, the one who, among other duties, announced the forthcoming births of John the Baptist and Jesus (Luke 1).
8. Administrative deputy of a bishop.

Nor would they permit Gabriel to be any way maltreated, say or do what he would; so that it came to pass[9] that Gabriel had the complete freedom of the ship. The consequence of all this was, that the archangel cared little or nothing for the captain and mates; and since the epidemic had broken out, he carried a higher hand than ever; declaring that the plague, as he called it, was at his sole command; nor should it be stayed but according to his good pleasure. The sailors, mostly poor devils, cringed, and some of them fawned before him; in obedience to his instructions, sometimes rendering him personal homage, as to a god. Such things may seem incredible; but, however wondrous, they are true. Nor is the history of fanatics half so striking in respect to the measureless self-deception of the fanatic himself, as his measureless power of deceiving and bedevilling so many others. But it is time to return to the Pequod.

"I fear not thy epidemic, man," said Ahab from the bulwarks, to Captain Mayhew, who stood in the boat's stern; "come on board."

But now Gabriel started to his feet.

"Think, think of the fevers, yellow and bilious! Beware of the horrible plague!"

"Gabriel, Gabriel!" cried Captain Mayhew; "thou must either—" But that instant a headlong wave shot the boat far ahead, and its seethings drowned all speech.

"Hast thou seen the White Whale?" demanded Ahab, when the boat drifted back.

"Think, think of thy whale-boat, stoven and sunk! Beware of the horrible tail!"

"I tell thee again, Gabriel, that—" But again the boat tore ahead as if dragged by fiends. Nothing was said for some moments, while a succession of riotous waves rolled by, which by one of those occasional caprices of the seas were tumbling, not heaving it. Meantime, the hoisted sperm whale's head jogged about very violently, and Gabriel was seen eyeing it with rather more apprehensiveness than his archangel nature seemed to warrant.

When this interlude was over, Captain Mayhew began a dark story concerning Moby Dick; not, however, without frequent interruptions from Gabriel, whenever his name was mentioned, and the crazy sea that seemed leagued with him.

It seemed that the Jeroboam had not long left home, when upon speaking a whale-ship, her people were reliably apprised of the existence of Moby Dick, and the havoc he had made. Greedily sucking in this intelligence, Gabriel solemnly warned the captain against attacking the White Whale, in case the monster should be seen; in his gibbering insanity, pronouncing the White Whale to be no less a being than the Shaker God incarnated; the Shakers receiving the Bible.[1] But when, some year or two afterwards, Moby Dick was fairly sighted from the mast-heads, Macey, the chief mate, burned with ardor to encounter him; and the captain himself being not unwilling to let him have the opportunity, despite all the archangel's denunciations and forewarnings, Macey succeeded in persuading five

9. A biblical phrase, often used to indicate the fulfillment of God's words.
1. A puzzling expression. Shaker belief does not account for Gabriel's notion of Moby Dick. Melville may mean merely that this was the way Gabriel received or interpreted the Bible (that this was this particular Shaker's way of interpreting the Bible).

men to man his boat. With them he pushed off; and, after much weary pulling, and many perilous, unsuccessful onsets, he at last succeeded in getting one iron fast. Meantime, Gabriel, ascending to the main-royal mast-head, was tossing one arm in frantic gestures, and hurling forth prophecies of speedy doom to the sacrilegious assailants of his divinity. Now, while Macey, the mate, was standing up in his boat's bow, and with all the reckless energy of his tribe was venting his wild exclamations upon the whale, and essaying to get a fair chance for his poised lance, lo! a broad white shadow rose from the sea; by its quick, fanning motion, temporarily taking the breath out of the bodies of the oarsmen. Next instant, the luckless mate, so full of furious life, was smitten bodily into the air, and making a long arc in his descent, fell into the sea at the distance of about fifty yards. Not a chip of the boat was harmed, nor a hair of any oarsman's head; but the mate for ever sank.

It is well to parenthesize here, that of the fatal accidents in the Sperm-Whale Fishery, this kind is perhaps almost as frequent as any. Sometimes, nothing is injured but the man who is thus annihilated; oftener the boat's bow is knocked off, or the thigh-board, in which the headsman stands, is torn from its place and accompanies the body. But strangest of all is the circumstance, that in more instances than one, when the body has been recovered, not a single mark of violence is discernible; the man being stark dead.

The whole calamity, with the falling form of Macey, was plainly descried from the ship. Raising a piercing shriek—"The vial! the vial!" Gabriel called off the terror-stricken crew from the further hunting of the whale. This terrible event clothed the archangel with added influence; because his credulous disciples believed that he had specifically fore-announced it, instead of only making a general prophecy, which any one might have done, and so have chanced to hit one of many marks in the wide margin allowed. He became a nameless terror to the ship.

Mayhew having concluded his narration, Ahab put such questions to him, that the stranger captain could not forbear inquiring whether he intended to hunt the White Whale, if opportunity should offer. To which Ahab answered—"Aye." Straightway, then, Gabriel once more started to his feet, glaring upon the old man, and vehemently exclaimed, with downward pointed finger—"Think, think of the blasphemer—dead, and down there!—beware of the blasphemer's end!"[2]

Ahab stolidly turned aside; then said to Mayhew, "Captain, I have just bethought me of my letter-bag; there is a letter for one of thy officers, if I mistake not. Starbuck, look over the bag."

Every whale-ship takes out a goodly number of letters for various ships, whose delivery to the persons to whom they may be addressed, depends upon the mere chance of encountering them in the four oceans. Thus, most letters never reach their mark; and many are only received after attaining an age of two or three years or more.

2. Gabriel warns that Ahab, like Macy, will go to hell for the blasphemy of attacking Moby Dick (God). Blasphemy was an extremely sensitive topic in the Melville house, for Herman Melville's father-in-law, Lemuel Shaw, as chief justice of the Massachusetts Supreme Court, a decade earlier had become the last judge in America to sentence someone to jail for blasphemy. After *Moby-Dick* was published, Melville was angered, his mother wrote, that the local Pittsfield people were gossiping that the book was worse than blasphemous, and the reviewer in the New York *Independent* publicly threatened him with hell fire for writing the book.

Soon Starbuck returned with a letter in his hand. It was sorely tumbled, damp, and covered with a dull, spotted, green mould, in consequence of being kept in a dark locker of the cabin. Of such a letter, Death himself might well have been the post-boy.

"Can'st not read it?" cried Ahab. "Give it me, man. Aye, aye, it's but a dim scrawl;—what's this?" As he was studying it out, Starbuck took a long cutting-spade pole, and with his knife slightly split the end, to insert the letter there, and in that way, hand it to the boat, without its coming any closer to the ship.

Meantime, Ahab holding the letter, muttered, "Mr. Har—yes, Mr. Harry—(a woman's pinny hand,—the man's wife, I'll wager)—Aye—Mr. Harry Macey, Ship Jeroboam;—why it's Macey, and he's dead!"

"Poor fellow! poor fellow! and from his wife," sighed Mayhew; "but let me have it."

"Nay, keep it thyself," cried Gabriel to Ahab; "thou art soon going that way."

"Curses throttle thee!" yelled Ahab. "Captain Mayhew, stand by now to receive it;" and taking the fatal missive from Starbuck's hands, he caught it in the slit of the pole, and reached it over towards the boat. But as he did so, the oarsmen expectantly desisted from rowing; the boat drifted a little towards the ship's stern; so that, as if by magic, the letter suddenly ranged along with Gabriel's eager hand. He clutched it in an instant, seized the boat-knife, and impaling the letter on it, sent it thus loaded back into the ship. It fell at Ahab's feet.[3] Then Gabriel shrieked out to his comrades to give way with their oars, and in that manner the mutinous boat rapidly shot away from the Pequod.

As, after this interlude, the seamen resumed their work upon the jacket of the whale, many strange things were hinted in reference to this wild affair.

CHAPTER 72

THE MONKEY-ROPE[1]

In the tumultuous business of cutting-in and attending to a whale, there is much running backwards and forwards among the crew. Now hands are wanted here, and then again hands are wanted there. There is no staying in any one place; for at one and the same time everything has to be done everywhere. It is much the same with him who endeavors the description of the scene. We must now retrace our way a little. It was mentioned that upon first breaking ground in the whale's back, the blubber-hook was inserted into the original hole there cut by the spades of the mates. But how did so clumsy and weighty a mass as that same hook get fixed in that hole? It was inserted there by my particular friend Queequeg, whose duty it was, as harpooneer, to descend upon the monster's back for the special purpose referred to. But in very many cases, circumstances require that the harpooneer shall remain on the whale till the whole flensing or stripping

3. I.e., right in front of him (his single foot and his peg leg).

1. Mansfield and Vincent (p. 764) show that this chapter was suggested by Francis Allyn Olmsted's *Incidents of a Whaling Voyage* (1841).

operation is concluded. The whale, be it observed, lies almost entirely submerged, excepting the immediate parts operated upon. So down there, some ten feet below the level of the deck, the poor harpooneer flounders about, half on the whale and half in the water, as the vast mass revolves like a tread-mill beneath him. On the occasion in question, Queequeg figured in the Highland costume—a skirt and socks—in which to my eyes, at least, he appeared to uncommon advantage; and no one had a better chance to observe him, as will presently be seen.[2]

Being the savage's bowsman, that is, the person who pulled the bow-oar in his boat (the second one from forward), it was my cheerful duty to attend upon him while taking that hard-scrabble scramble upon the dead whale's back. You have seen Italian organ-boys holding a dancing-ape by a long cord. Just so, from the ship's steep side, did I hold Queequeg down there in the sea, by what is technically called in the fishery a monkey-rope, attached to a strong strip of canvas belted round his waist.

It was a humorously perilous business for both of us. For, before we proceed further, it must be said that the monkey-rope was fast at both ends; fast to Queequeg's broad canvas belt, and fast to my narrow leather one. So that for better or for worse, we two, for the time, were wedded; and should poor Queequeg sink to rise no more, then both usage and honor demanded, that instead of cutting the cord, it should drag me down in his wake. So, then, an elongated Siamese ligature united us. Queequeg was my own inseparable twin brother; nor could I any way get rid of the dangerous liabilities which the hempen bond entailed.

So strongly and metaphysically did I conceive of my situation then, that while earnestly watching his motions, I seemed distinctly to perceive that my own individuality was now merged in a joint stock company of two: that my free will had received a mortal wound; and that another's mistake or misfortune might plunge innocent me into unmerited disaster and death. Therefore, I saw that here was a sort of interregnum in Providence; for its even-handed equity never could have sanctioned so gross an injustice. And yet still further pondering—while I jerked him now and then from between the whale and the ship, which would threaten to jam him—still further pondering, I say, I saw that this situation of mine was the precise situation of every mortal that breathes; only, in most cases, he, one way or other, has this Siamese connexion with a plurality of other mortals. If your banker breaks, you snap; if your apothecary by mistake sends you poison in your pills, you die. True, you may say that, by exceeding caution, you may possibly escape these and the multitudinous other evil chances of life. But handle Queequeg's monkey-rope heedfully as I would, sometimes he jerked it so, that I came very near sliding overboard. Nor could I possibly forget that, do what I would, I only had the management of one end of it.[3]

2. Not an actual Scottish kilt but something like a butcher's skirtlike apron, no pants, and (for traction) coarse socks and no shoes. "Skirt" is an emendation for *shirt*. Melville was recalling a passage in Sir Walter Scott's *Waverley* on a kilt's showing off a man's sinewy limbs, with the additional joke that in his rolling and swaying on the whale and in Ishmael's jerking him with the rope Queequeg shows off more than his legs.
3. The monkey-rope is found in all whalers; but it was only in the Pequod that the monkey and his holder were ever tied together. This improvement upon the original usage was introduced by no less a man than Stubb, in order to afford to the imperilled harpooneer the strongest possible guarantee for the faithfulness and vigilance of his monkey-rope holder. [Melville's note.]

I have hinted that I would often jerk poor Queequeg from between the whale and the ship—where he would occasionally fall, from the incessant rolling and swaying of both. But this was not the only jamming jeopardy he was exposed to. Unappalled by the massacre made upon them during the night, the sharks now freshly and more keenly allured by the before pent blood which began to flow from the carcase—the rabid creatures swarmed round it like bees in a beehive.

And right in among those sharks was Queequeg; who often pushed them aside with his floundering feet. A thing altogether incredible were it not that attracted by such prey as a dead whale, the otherwise miscellaneously carnivorous shark will seldom touch a man.

Nevertheless, it may well be believed that since they have such a ravenous finger in the pie,[4] it is deemed but wise to look sharp to them. Accordingly, besides the monkey-rope, with which I now and then jerked the poor fellow from too close a vicinity to the maw of what seemed a peculiarly ferocious shark—he was provided with still another protection. Suspended over the side in one of the stages, Tashtego and Daggoo continually flourished over his head a couple of keen whale-spades, wherewith they slaughtered as many sharks as they could reach. This procedure of theirs, to be sure, was very disinterested and benevolent of them. They meant Queequeg's best happiness, I admit; but in their hasty zeal to befriend him, and from the circumstance that both he and the sharks were at times half hidden by the blood-mudded water, those indiscreet spades of theirs would come nearer amputating a leg than a tail. But poor Queequeg, I suppose, straining and gasping there with that great iron hook—poor Queequeg, I suppose, only prayed to his Yojo, and gave up his life into the hands of his gods.

Well, well, my dear comrade and twin-brother, thought I, as I drew in and then slacked off the rope to every swell of the sea—what matters it, after all? Are you not the precious image of each and all of us men in this whaling world? That unsounded ocean you gasp in, is Life; those sharks, your foes; those spades, your friends; and what between sharks and spades you are in a sad pickle[5] and peril, poor lad.

But courage! there is good cheer in store for you, Queequeg. For now, as with blue lips and bloodshot eyes the exhausted savage at last climbs up the chains and stands all dripping and involuntarily trembling over the side; the steward advances, and with a benevolent, consolatory glance hands him—what? Some hot Cogniac? No! hands him, ye gods! hands him a cup of tepid ginger and water!

"Ginger?[6] Do I smell ginger?" suspiciously asked Stubb, coming near. "Yes, this must be ginger," peering into the as yet untasted cup. Then standing as if incredulous for a while, he calmly walked towards the astonished steward slowly saying, "Ginger? ginger? and will you have the goodness to tell me, Mr. Dough-Boy, where lies the virtue of ginger? Ginger! is ginger the sort of fuel you use, Dough-Boy, to kindle a fire in this shivering cannibal? Ginger!—what the devil is ginger?—sea-coal?—fire-wood?—lucifer

4. Piece of the action.
5. In a tough spot (proverbial).
6. Stubb scorns Aunt Charity's nonalcoholic ginger-jub (ginger and water) as not "hot" enough to warm up poor Queequeg, unlike the sea coal, firewood, lucifer matches (newly invented striking matches), tinder, and gunpowder mentioned at the end of the chapter.

matches?—tinder?—gunpowder?—what the devil is ginger, I say, that you offer this cup to our poor Queequeg here?"

"There is some sneaking Temperance Society movement about this business," he suddenly added, now approaching Starbuck, who had just come from forward. "Will you look at that kannakin, sir: smell of it, if you please." Then watching the mate's countenance, he added: "The steward, Mr. Starbuck, had the face to offer that calomel and jalap[7] to Queequeg, there, this instant off the whale. Is the steward an apothecary, sir? and may I ask whether this is the sort of bellows by which he blows back the breath into a half-drowned man?"

"I trust not," said Starbuck, "it is poor stuff enough."

"Aye, aye, steward," cried Stubb, "we'll teach you to drug a harpooneer; none of your apothecary's medicine here; you want to poison us, do ye? You have got out insurances on our lives and want to murder us all, and pocket the proceeds, do ye?"

"It was not me," cried Dough-Boy, "it was Aunt Charity that brought the ginger on board; and bade me never give the harpooneers any spirits, but only this ginger-jub—so she called it."

"Ginger-jub! you gingerly rascal! take that![8] and run along with ye to the lockers, and get something better. I hope I do no wrong, Mr. Starbuck. It is the captain's orders—grog for the harpooneer on a whale."

"Enough," replied Starbuck, "only don't hit him again, but—"

"Oh, I never hurt when I hit, except when I hit a whale or something of that sort; and this fellow's a weazel. What were you about saying, sir?"

"Only this: go down with him, and get what thou wantest thyself."

When Stubb reappeared, he came with a dark flask in one hand, and a sort of tea-caddy in the other. The first contained strong spirits, and was handed to Queequeg; the second was Aunt Charity's gift, and that was freely given to the waves.

CHAPTER 73

STUBB AND FLASK KILL A RIGHT WHALE; AND THEN HAVE A TALK OVER HIM

It must be borne in mind that all this time we have a Sperm Whale's prodigious head hanging to the Pequod's side. But we must let it continue hanging there a while till we can get a chance to attend to it. For the present other matters press, and the best we can do now for the head, is to pray heaven the tackles may hold.

Now, during the past night and forenoon, the Pequod had gradually drifted into a sea, which, by its occasional patches of yellow brit, gave unusual tokens of the vicinity of Right Whales, a species of the Leviathan that but few supposed to be at this particular time lurking anywhere near. And though all hands commonly disdained the capture of those inferior creatures; and though the Pequod was not commissioned to cruise for them at all, and though she had passed numbers of them near the Crozetts without lowering a boat; yet now that a Sperm Whale had been brought alongside

7. Common laxatives.
8. Stubb's hitting the steward is the only time an officer strikes a man, after the *Pequod* sails.

and beheaded, to the surprise of all, the announcement was made that a Right Whale should be captured that day, if opportunity offered.

Nor was this long wanting. Tall spouts were seen to leeward; and two boats, Stubb's and Flask's, were detached in pursuit. Pulling further and further away, they at last became almost invisible to the men at the masthead. But suddenly in the distance, they saw a great heap of tumultuous white water, and soon after news came from aloft that one or both the boats must be fast. An interval passed and the boats were in plain sight, in the act of being dragged right towards the ship by the towing whale. So close did the monster come to the hull, that at first it seemed as if he meant it malice; but suddenly going down in a maelstrom, within three rods of the planks, he wholly disappeared from view, as if diving under the keel. "Cut, cut!" was the cry from the ship to the boats, which, for one instant, seemed on the point of being brought with a deadly dash against the vessel's side. But having plenty of line yet in the tubs, and the whale not sounding very rapidly, they paid out abundance of rope, and at the same time pulled with all their might so as to get ahead of the ship. For a few minutes the struggle was intensely critical; for while they still slacked out the tightened line in one direction, and still plied their oars in another, the contending strain threatened to take them under. But it was only a few feet advance they sought to gain. And they stuck to it till they did gain it; when instantly, a swift tremor was felt running like lightning along the keel, as the strained line, scraping beneath the ship, suddenly rose to view under her bows, snapping and quivering; and so flinging off its drippings, that the drops fell like bits of broken glass on the water, while the whale beyond also rose to sight, and once more the boats were free to fly. But the fagged whale abated his speed, and blindly altering his course, went round the stern of the ship towing the two boats after him, so that they performed a complete circuit.

Meantime, they hauled more and more upon their lines, till close flanking him on both sides, Stubb answered Flask with lance for lance; and thus round and round the Pequod the battle went, while the multitudes of sharks that had before swum round the Sperm Whale's body, rushed to the fresh blood that was spilled, thirstily drinking at every new gash, as the eager Israelites did at the new bursting fountains that poured from the smitten rock.[1]

At last his spout grew thick, and with a frightful roll and vomit, he turned upon his back a corpse.

While the two headsmen were engaged in making fast cords to his flukes, and in other ways getting the mass in readiness for towing, some conversation ensued between them.

"I wonder what the old man wants with this lump of foul lard," said Stubb, not without some disgust at the thought of having to do with so ignoble a leviathan.

"Wants with it?" said Flask, coiling some spare line in the boat's bow, "did you never hear that the ship which but once has a Sperm Whale's head hoisted on her starboard side, and at the same time a Right Whale's

1. Exodus 17.6, where God says: "Behold, I will stand before thee there upon the rock in Horeb; and thou shalt smite the rock, and there shall come water out of it, that the people may drink. And Moses did so in the sight of the elders of Israel."

on the larboard; did you never hear, Stubb, that that ship can never afterwards capsize?"

"Why not?"

"I don't know, but I heard that gamboge[2] ghost of a Fedallah saying so, and he seems to know all about ships' charms. But I sometimes think he'll charm the ship to no good at last. I don't half like that chap, Stubb. Did you ever notice how that tusk of his is a sort of carved into a snake's head, Stubb?"

"Sink him! I never look at him at all; but if ever I get a chance of a dark night, and he standing hard by the bulwarks, and no one by; look down there, Flask"—pointing into the sea with a peculiar motion of both hands—"Aye, will I! Flask, I take that Fedallah to be the devil in disguise.[3] Do you believe that cock and bull story[4] about his having been stowed away on board ship? He's the devil, I say. The reason why you don't see his tail, is because he tucks it up out of sight; he carries it coiled away in his pocket, I guess. Blast him! now that I think of it, he's always wanting oakum[5] to stuff into the toes of his boots."

"He sleeps in his boots, don't he? He hasn't got any hammock; but I've seen him lay of nights in a coil of rigging."

"No doubt, and it's because of his cursed tail; he coils it down, do ye see, in the eye of the rigging."

"What's the old man have so much to do with him for?"

"Striking up a swap or a bargain, I suppose."

"Bargain?—about what?"

"Why, do ye see, the old man is hard bent after that White Whale, and the devil there is trying to come round him, and get him to swap away his silver watch, or his soul, or something of that sort, and then he'll surrender Moby Dick."

"Pooh! Stubb, you are skylarking; how can Fedallah do that?"

"I don't know, Flask, but the devil is a curious chap, and a wicked one, I tell ye. Why, they say[6] as how he went a sauntering into the old flag-ship once, switching his tail about devilish easy and gentlemanlike, and inquiring if the old governor was at home. Well, he was at home, and asked the devil what he wanted. The devil, switching his hoofs, up and says, 'I want John.' 'What for?' says the old governor. 'What business is that of yours,' says the devil, getting mad,—'I want to use him.' 'Take him,' says the governor—and by the Lord, Flask, if the devil didn't give John the Asiatic cholera before he got through with him, I'll eat this whale in one mouthful. But look sharp—aint you all ready there? Well, then, pull ahead, and let's get the whale alongside."

"I think I remember some such story as you were telling," said Flask, when at last the two boats were slowly advancing with their burden towards the ship, "but I can't remember where."

2. Mustard yellow (the color of a pigment from resin of southeast Asian trees). See the retrospective 1853 article on p. 614 herein in which Francis Jacox says of *The Whale* that "the catastrophe, in its whirl of waters and fancies, resembles one of [J. M. W.] Turner's late nebulous transgressions in gamboge."
3. Stubb accepts the folk version of the devil as shape shifting, but with a tail and cloven hooves, a deceiver who bargains for souls and carries them off to hell.
4. A fantastic tale, told as true.
5. Tarred hemp used for caulking leaks; Stubb means Fedallah has hoofs, not feet.
6. What follows is a travesty of the biblical story of Job, whom God ("the old governor") allowed Satan to afflict.

"Three Spaniards?[7] Adventures of those three bloody-minded soldadoes? Did ye read it there, Flask? I guess ye did?"

"No: never saw such a book; heard of it, though. But now, tell me, Stubb, do you suppose that that devil you was speaking of just now, was the same you say is now on board the Pequod?"

"Am I the same man that helped kill this whale? Doesn't the devil live for ever; who ever heard that the devil was dead? Did you ever see any parson a wearing mourning for the devil? And if the devil has a latch-key to get into the admiral's cabin, don't you suppose he can crawl into a port-hole? Tell me that, Mr. Flask?"

"How old do you suppose Fedallah is, Stubb?"

"Do you see that mainmast there?" pointing to the ship; "well, that's the figure one; now take all the hoops in the Pequod's hold, and string 'em along in a row with that mast, for oughts, do you see; well, that wouldn't begin to be Fedallah's age. Nor all the coopers in creation couldn't show hoops enough to make oughts enough."

"But see here, Stubb, I thought you a little boasted just now, that you meant to give Fedallah a sea-toss, if you got a good chance. Now, if he's so old as all those hoops of yours come to, and if he is going to live for ever, what good will it do to pitch him overboard—tell me that?"

"Give him a good ducking, anyhow."

"But he'd crawl back."

"Duck him again; and keep ducking him."

"Suppose he should take it into his head to duck you, though—yes, and drown you—what then?"

"I should like to see him try it; I'd give him such a pair of black eyes that he wouldn't dare to show his face in the admiral's cabin again for a long while, let alone down in the orlop there, where he lives, and hereabouts on the upper decks where he sneaks so much. Damn the devil, Flask; do you suppose I'm afraid of the devil? Who's afraid of him, except the old governor who daresn't catch him and put him in double-darbies, as he deserves, but lets him go about kidnapping people; aye, and signed a bond with him, that all the people the devil kidnapped, he'd roast for him? There's a governor!"

"Do you suppose Fedallah wants to kidnap Captain Ahab?"

"Do I suppose it? You'll know it before long, Flask. But I am going now to keep a sharp look-out on him; and if I see anything very suspicious going on, I'll just take him by the nape of his neck, and say—Look here, Beelzebub, you don't do it; and if he makes any fuss, by the Lord I'll make a grab into his pocket for his tail, take it to the capstan, and give him such a wrenching and heaving, that his tail will come short off at the stump—do you see; and then, I rather guess when he finds himself docked in that queer fashion, he'll sneak off without the poor satisfaction of feeling his tail between his legs."

"And what will you do with the tail, Stubb?"

"Do with it? Sell it for an ox whip when we get home;—what else?"

"Now, do you mean what you say, and have been saying all along, Stubb?"

"Mean or not mean, here we are at the ship."

7. Stubb flaunts his intellectual superiority in teasingly suggesting that Flask may have found the story in George Walker's melodramatic novel *The Three Spaniards* (1800).

The boats were here hailed, to tow the whale on the larboard side, where fluke chains and other necessaries were already prepared for securing him.

"Didn't I tell you so?" said Flask; "yes, you'll soon see this right whale's head hoisted up opposite that parmacetti's."

In good time, Flask's saying proved true. As before, the Pequod steeply leaned over towards the sperm whale's head, now, by the counterpoise of both heads, she regained her even keel; though sorely strained, you may well believe. So, when on one side you hoist in Locke's head, you go over that way; but now, on the other side, hoist in Kant's and you come back again; but in very poor plight. Thus, some minds for ever keep trimming boat. Oh, ye foolish! throw all these thunder-heads overboard, and then you will float light and right.[8]

In disposing of the body of a right whale, when brought alongside the ship, the same preliminary proceedings commonly take place as in the case of a sperm whale; only, in the latter instance, the head is cut off whole, but in the former the lips and tongue are separately removed and hoisted on deck, with all the well known black bone attached to what is called the crown-piece. But nothing like this, in the present case, had been done. The carcases of both whales had dropped astern; and the head-laden ship not a little resembled a mule carrying a pair of overburdening panniers.

Meantime, Fedallah was calmly eyeing the right whale's head, and ever and anon glancing from the deep wrinkles there to the lines in his own hand. And Ahab chanced so to stand, that the Parsee occupied his shadow; while, if the Parsee's shadow was there at all it seemed only to blend with, and lengthen Ahab's. As the crew toiled on, Laplandish[9] speculations were bandied among them, concerning all these passing things.

CHAPTER 74

THE SPERM WHALE'S HEAD—CONTRASTED VIEW

Here, now, are two great whales, laying their heads together; let us join them, and lay together our own.

Of the grand order of folio leviathans, the Sperm Whale and the Right Whale are by far the most noteworthy. They are the only whales regularly hunted by man. To the Nantucketer, they present the two extremes of all the known varieties of the whale. As the external difference between them is mainly observable in their heads; and as a head of each is this moment hanging from the Pequod's side; and as we may freely go from one to the other, by merely stepping across the deck:—where, I should like to know, will you obtain a better chance to study practical cetology than here?

In the first place, you are struck by the general contrast between these heads. Both are massive enough in all conscience; but there is a certain mathematical symmetry in the Sperm Whale's which the Right Whale's

8. John Locke (1632–1704), English empirical philosopher whose commonly accepted doctrines were then being challenged by "transcendentalists" who used views of the German idealistic philosopher Immanuel Kant (1724–1804). This passage rejects both positions and humorously advocates dispensing with them, along with views of all such heavy thinkers ("thunderheads," literally, lightning-charged clouds, but with a pun on "dunderheads," blockheads).
9. Mystical, occult, of the sort attributed to witch-haunted natives of this extreme northern region of Europe.

sadly lacks. There is more character in the Sperm Whale's head. As you behold it, you involuntarily yield the immense superiority to him, in point of pervading dignity. In the present instance, too, this dignity is heightened by the pepper and salt color of his head at the summit, giving token of advanced age and large experience. In short, he is what the fishermen technically call a "grey-headed whale."

Let us now note what is least dissimilar in these heads—namely, the two most important organs, the eye and the ear. Far back on the side of the head, and low down, near the angle of either whale's jaw, if you narrowly search, you will at last see a lashless eye, which you would fancy to be a young colt's eye; so out of all proportion is it to the magnitude of the head.

Now, from this peculiar sideway position of the whale's eyes, it is plain that he can never see an object which is exactly ahead, no more than he can one exactly astern. In a word, the position of the whale's eyes corresponds to that of a man's ears; and you may fancy, for yourself, how it would fare with you, did you sideways survey objects through your ears. You would find that you could only command some thirty degrees of vision in advance of the straight side-line of sight; and about thirty more behind it. If your bitterest foe were walking straight towards you, with dagger uplifted in broad day, you would not be able to see him, any more than if he were stealing upon you from behind. In a word, you would have two backs, so to speak; but, at the same time, also, two fronts (side fronts): for what is it that makes the front of a man—what, indeed, but his eyes?

Moreover, while in most other animals that I can now think of, the eyes are so planted as imperceptibly to blend their visual power, so as to produce one picture and not two to the brain; the peculiar position of the whale's eyes, effectually divided as they are by many cubic feet of solid head, which towers between them like a great mountain separating two lakes in valleys; this, of course, must wholly separate the impressions which each independent organ imparts. The whale, therefore, must see one distinct picture on this side, and another distinct picture on that side; while all between must be profound darkness and nothingness to him. Man may, in effect, be said to look out on the world from a sentry-box with two joined sashes for his window. But with the whale, these two sashes are separately inserted, making two distinct windows, but sadly impairing the view. This peculiarity of the whale's eyes is a thing always to be borne in mind in the fishery; and to be remembered by the reader in some subsequent scenes.

A curious and most puzzling question might be started concerning this visual matter as touching the Leviathan. But I must be content with a hint. So long as a man's eyes are open in the light, the act of seeing is involuntary; that is, he cannot then help mechanically seeing whatever objects are before him. Nevertheless, any one's experience will teach him, that though he can take in an undiscriminating sweep of things at one glance, it is quite impossible for him, attentively, and completely, to examine any two things—however large or however small—at one and the same instant of time; never mind if they lie side by side and touch each other. But if you now come to separate these two objects, and surround each by a circle of profound darkness; then, in order to see one of them, in such a manner as to bring your mind to bear on it, the other will be utterly excluded from your contemporary consciousness. How is it, then, with the whale? True, both his eyes, in themselves, must simultaneously act; but is his

brain so much more comprehensive, combining, and subtle than man's, that he can at the same moment of time attentively examine two distinct prospects, one on one side of him, and the other in an exactly opposite direction? If he can, then is it as marvellous a thing in him, as if a man were able simultaneously to go through the demonstrations of two distinct problems in Euclid. Nor, strictly investigated, is there any incongruity in this comparison.

It may be but an idle whim, but it has always seemed to me, that the extraordinary vacillations of movement displayed by some whales when beset by three or four boats; the timidity and liability to queer frights, so common to such whales; I think that all this indirectly proceeds from the helpless perplexity of volition, in which their divided and diametrically opposite powers of vision must involve them.

But the ear of the whale is full as curious as the eye. If you are an entire stranger to their race, you might hunt over these two heads for hours, and never discover that organ. The ear has no external leaf whatever; and into the hole itself you can hardly insert a quill, so wondrously minute is it. It is lodged a little behind the eye. With respect to their ears, this important difference is to be observed between the sperm whale and the right. While the ear of the former has an external opening, that of the latter is entirely and evenly covered over with a membrane, so as to be quite imperceptible from without.

Is it not curious, that so vast a being as the whale should see the world through so small an eye, and hear the thunder through an ear which is smaller than a hare's? But if his eyes were broad as the lens of Herschel's great telescope;[1] and his ears capacious as the porches of cathedrals; would that make him any longer of sight, or sharper of hearing? Not at all.—Why then do you try to "enlarge" your mind? Subtilize it.

Let us now with whatever levers and steam-engines we have at hand, cant over the sperm whale's head, so that it may lie bottom up; then, ascending by a ladder to the summit, have a peep down the mouth; and were it not that the body is now completely separated from it, with a lantern we might descend into the great Kentucky Mammoth Cave[2] of his stomach. But let us hold on here by this tooth, and look about us where we are. What a really beautiful and chaste-looking mouth! from floor to ceiling, lined, or rather papered with a glistening white membrane, glossy as bridal satins.

But come out now, and look at this portentous lower jaw, which seems like the long narrow lid of an immense snuff-box, with the hinge at one end, instead of one side. If you pry it up, so as to get it overhead, and expose its rows of teeth, it seems a terrific portcullis; and such, alas! it proves to many a poor wight in the fishery, upon whom these spikes fall with impaling force. But far more terrible is it to behold, when fathoms down in the sea, you see some sulky whale, floating there suspended, with his prodigious jaw, some fifteen feet long, hanging straight down at right-angles with his body, for all the world like a ship's jib-boom. This whale is not dead; he is only dispirited; out of sorts, perhaps; hypochondriac; and so supine, that the hinges of his jaw have relaxed, leaving him there in that

1. The large instrument with which in 1789 the astronomer Sir William Herschel (1738–1822) made notable discoveries.
2. Extensive caverns in south-central Kentucky.

ungainly sort of plight, a reproach to all his tribe, who must, no doubt, imprecate lock-jaws upon him.

In most cases this lower jaw—being easily unhinged by a practised artist—is disengaged and hoisted on deck for the purpose of extracting the ivory teeth, and furnishing a supply of that hard white whalebone with which the fishermen fashion all sorts of curious articles, including canes, umbrella-stocks, and handles to riding-whips.

With a long, weary hoist the jaw is dragged on board, as if it were an anchor; and when the proper time comes—some few days after the other work—Queequeg, Daggoo, and Tashtego, being all accomplished dentists, are set to drawing teeth. With a keen cutting-spade, Queequeg lances the gums; then the jaw is lashed down to ringbolts, and a tackle being rigged from aloft, they drag out these teeth, as Michigan oxen drag stumps of old oaks out of wild wood-lands. There are generally forty-two teeth in all; in old whales, much worn down, but undecayed; nor filled after our artificial fashion. The jaw is afterwards sawn into slabs, and piled away like joists for building houses.

CHAPTER 75

THE RIGHT WHALE'S HEAD—CONTRASTED VIEW

Crossing the deck, let us now have a good long look at the Right Whale's head.

As in general shape the noble Sperm Whale's head may be compared to a Roman war-chariot (especially in front, where it is so broadly rounded); so, at a broad view, the Right Whale's head bears a rather inelegant resemblance to a gigantic galliot-toed shoe.[1] Two hundred years ago an old Dutch voyager likened its shape to that of a shoemaker's last.[2] And in this same last or shoe, that old woman of the nursery tale,[3] with the swarming brood, might very comfortably be lodged, she and all her progeny.

But as you come nearer to this great head it begins to assume different aspects, according to your point of view. If you stand on its summit and look at these two *f*-shaped spout-holes, you would take the whole head for an enormous bass-viol, and these spiracles, the apertures in its sounding-board. Then, again, if you fix your eye upon this strange, crested, comb-like incrustation on the top of the mass—this green, barnacled thing, which the Greenlanders call the "crown," and the Southern fishers the "bonnet" of the Right Whale; fixing your eyes solely on this, you would take the head for the trunk of some huge oak, with a bird's nest in its crotch. At any rate, when you watch those live crabs that nestle here on this bonnet, such an idea will be almost sure to occur to you; unless, indeed, your fancy has been fixed by the technical term "crown" also bestowed upon it; in which case you will take great interest in thinking how this mighty monster is actually a diademed king of the sea, whose green crown has been put together for him in this marvellous manner. But

1. Square-toed (see Melville's footnote on p. 221).
2. The foot-shaped form a shoemaker molds shoe leather around; the result here is a wide-toed Dutch shoe, like Dutch wooden shoes.
3. In the Mother Goose nursery rhyme, the old woman who lived in a shoe had so many children she didn't know what to do.

if this whale be a king, he is a very sulky looking fellow to grace a diadem. Look at that hanging lower lip! what a huge sulk and pout is there! a sulk and pout, by carpenter's measurement, about twenty feet long and five feet deep; a sulk and pout that will yield you some 500 gallons of oil and more.

A great pity, now, that this unfortunate whale should be hare-lipped. The fissure is about a foot across. Probably the mother during an important interval was sailing down the Peruvian coast, when earthquakes caused the beach to gape.[4] Over this lip, as over a slippery threshold, we now slide into the mouth. Upon my word were I at Mackinaw,[5] I should take this to be the inside of an Indian wigwam. Good Lord! is this the road that Jonah went? The roof is about twelve feet high, and runs to a pretty sharp angle, as if there were a regular ridge-pole there; while these ribbed, arched, hairy sides, present us with those wondrous, half vertical, scimitar-shaped slats of whalebone, say three hundred on a side, which depending from the upper part of the head or crown bone, form those Venetian blinds[6] which have elsewhere been cursorily mentioned. The edges of these bones are fringed with hairy fibres, through which the Right Whale strains the water, and in whose intricacies he retains the small fish, when open-mouthed he goes through the seas of brit in feeding time. In the central blinds of bone, as they stand in their natural order, there are certain curious marks, curves, hollows, and ridges, whereby some whalemen calculate the creature's age, as the age of an oak by its circular rings. Though the certainty of this criterion is far from demonstrable, yet it has the savor of analogical probability. At any rate, if we yield to it, we must grant a far greater age to the Right Whale than at first glance will seem reasonable.

In old times, there seem to have prevailed the most curious fancies concerning these blinds. One voyager in Purchas calls them the wondrous "whiskers" inside of the whale's mouth;[7] another, "hogs' bristles;" a third old gentleman in Hackluyt uses the following elegant language: "There are about two hundred and fifty fins growing on each side of his upper *chop*, which arch over his tongue on each side of his mouth."

As every one knows, these same "hogs' bristles," "fins," "whiskers," "blinds," or whatever you please, furnish to the ladies their busks and other stiffening contrivances. But in this particular, the demand has long been on the decline. It was in Queen Anne's time that the bone was in its glory, the farthingale[8] being then all the fashion. And as those ancient dames moved about gaily, though in the jaws of the whale, as you may say; even so, in a shower, with the like thoughtlessness, do we nowadays fly under the same jaws for protection; the umbrella being a tent spread over the same bone.

But now forget all about blinds and whiskers for a moment, and, standing in the Right Whale's mouth, look around you afresh. Seeing all these colonnades of bone so methodically ranged about, would you not think you

4. Yawn, open up. "Important interval": pregnancy, during which, it was said, the fetus might come to resemble any shocking sight the mother beheld.
5. In northern Michigan, as referred to in Ch. 54.
6. Mentioned in Ch. 58.
7. This reminds us that the Right Whale really has a sort of whisker, or rather a moustache, consisting of a few scattered white hairs on the upper part of the outer end of the lower jaw. Sometimes these tufts impart a rather brigandish expression to his otherwise solemn countenance. [Melville's note.]
8. A hooped support for a skirt; here, whalebone hoops. Anne reigned as queen of England from 1702 to 1714.

were inside of the great Haarlem organ,[9] and gazing upon its thousand pipes? For a carpet to the organ we have a rug of the softest Turkey—the tongue, which is glued, as it were, to the floor of the mouth. It is very fat and tender, and apt to tear in pieces in hoisting it on deck. This particular tongue now before us; at a passing glance I should say it was a six-barreler; that is, it will yield you about that amount of oil.

Ere this, you must have plainly seen the truth of what I started with—that the Sperm Whale and the Right Whale have almost entirely different heads. To sum up, then: in the Right Whale's there is no great well of sperm; no ivory teeth at all; no long, slender mandible of a lower jaw, like the Sperm Whale's. Nor in the Sperm Whale are there any of those blinds of bone; no huge lower lip; and scarcely anything of a tongue. Again, the Right Whale has two external spout-holes, the Sperm Whale only one.

Look your last, now, on these venerable hooded heads, while they yet lie together; for one will soon sink, unrecorded, in the sea; the other will not be very long in following.

Can you catch the expression of the Sperm Whale's there? It is the same he died with, only some of the longer wrinkles in the forehead seem now faded away. I think his broad brow to be full of a prairie-like placidity, born of a speculative indifference as to death. But mark the other head's expression. See that amazing lower lip, pressed by accident against the vessel's side, so as firmly to embrace the jaw. Does not this whole head seem to speak of an enormous practical resolution in facing death? This Right Whale I take to have been a Stoic; the Sperm Whale, a Platonian, who might have taken up Spinoza in his latter years.[1]

CHAPTER 76

THE BATTERING-RAM

Ere quitting, for the nonce, the Sperm Whale's head, I would have you, as a sensible physiologist, simply—particularly remark its front aspect, in all its compacted collectedness. I would have you investigate it now with the sole view of forming to yourself some unexaggerated, intelligent estimate of whatever battering-ram power may be lodged there. Here is a vital point; for you must either satisfactorily settle this matter with yourself, or for ever remain an infidel as to one of the most appalling, but not the less true events,[1] perhaps anywhere to be found in all recorded history.

You observe that in the ordinary swimming position of the Sperm Whale, the front of his head presents an almost wholly vertical plane to the water; you observe that the lower part of that front slopes considerably backwards, so as to furnish more of a retreat for the long socket which receives the boom-like lower jaw; you observe that the mouth is entirely under the head, much in the same way, indeed, as though your own mouth were entirely

9. The great organ in Haarlem (the city in the Netherlands) had 5,000 pipes and was the largest in the world.

1. The Greek Stoic philosophers accepted divine will and taught rationality, endurance, and practical duty. Followers of Plato sought knowledge of a transcendent being, or god, as did the Dutch philosopher Baruch Spinoza (1632–1677).

1. Instances when whales rammed and sank ships; rare but well documented, and always highly newsworthy in Melville's time.

under your chin. Moreover you observe that the whale has no external nose; and that what nose he has—his spout hole—is on the top of his head; you observe that his eyes and ears are at the sides of his head, nearly one third of his entire length from the front. Wherefore, you must now have perceived that the front of the Sperm Whale's head is a dead, blind wall, without a single organ or tender prominence of any sort whatsoever. Furthermore, you are now to consider that only in the extreme, lower, backward sloping part of the front of the head, is there the slightest vestige of bone; and not till you get near twenty feet from the forehead do you come to the full cranial development. So that this whole enormous boneless mass is as one wad. Finally, though, as will soon be revealed, its contents partly comprise the most delicate oil; yet, you are now to be apprised of the nature of the substance which so impregnably invests all that apparent effeminacy. In some previous place I have described to you how the blubber wraps the body of the whale, as the rind wraps an orange. Just so with the head; but with this difference: about the head this envelope, though not so thick, is of a boneless toughness, inestimable by any man who has not handled it. The severest pointed harpoon, the sharpest lance darted by the strongest human arm, impotently rebounds from it. It is as though the forehead of the Sperm Whale were paved with horses' hoofs. I do not think that any sensation lurks in it.

Bethink yourself also of another thing. When two large, loaded Indiamen chance to crowd and crush towards each other in the docks, what do the sailors do? They do not suspend between them, at the point of coming contact, any merely hard substance, like iron or wood. No, they hold there a large, round wad of tow and cork, enveloped in the thickest and toughest of ox-hide. That bravely and uninjured takes the jam which would have snapped all their oaken handspikes and iron crow-bars. By itself this sufficiently illustrates the obvious fact I drive at. But supplementary to this, it has hypothetically occurred to me, that as ordinary fish possess what is called a swimming bladder in them, capable, at will, of distension or contraction; and as the Sperm Whale, as far as I know, has no such provision in him; considering, too, the otherwise inexplicable manner in which he now depresses his head altogether beneath the surface, and anon swims with it high elevated out of the water; considering the unobstructed elasticity of its envelop; considering the unique interior of his head; it has hypothetically occurred to me, I say, that those mystical lung-celled honeycombs there may possibly have some hitherto unknown and unsuspected connexion with the outer air, so as to be susceptible to atmospheric distension and contraction. If this be so, fancy the irresistibleness of that might, to which the most impalpable and destructive of all elements contributes.

Now, mark. Unerringly impelling this dead, impregnable, uninjurable wall, and this most buoyant thing within; there swims behind it all a mass of tremendous life, only to be adequately estimated as piled wood is—by the cord; and all obedient to one volition, as the smallest insect. So that when I shall hereafter detail to you all the specialities and concentrations of potency everywhere lurking in this expansive monster; when I shall show you some of his more inconsiderable braining feats; I trust you will have renounced all ignorant incredulity, and be ready to abide by this; that though the Sperm Whale stove a passage through the Isthmus of Darien, and mixed the Atlantic with the Pacific, you would not elevate one hair of

your eye-brow. For unless you own the whale, you are but a provincial and sentimentalist in Truth. But clear Truth is a thing for salamander giants only to encounter; how small the chances for the provincials then? What befell the weakling youth lifting the dread goddess's veil at Sais?[2]

CHAPTER 77

THE GREAT HEIDELBURGH TUN[1]

Now comes the Baling of the Case. But to comprehend it aright, you must know something of the curious internal structure of the thing operated upon.

Regarding the Sperm Whale's head as a solid oblong, you may, on an inclined plane, sideways divide it into two quoins,[2] whereof the lower is the bony structure, forming the cranium and jaws, and the upper an unctuous mass wholly free from bones; its broad forward end forming the expanded vertical apparent forehead of the whale. At the middle of the forehead horizontally subdivide this upper quoin, and then you have two almost equal parts, which before were naturally divided by an internal wall of a thick tendinous substance.

The lower subdivided part, called the junk, is one immense honeycomb of oil, formed by the crossing and re-crossing, into ten thousand infiltrated cells, of tough elastic white fibres throughout its whole extent. The upper part, known as the Case, may be regarded as the great Heidelburgh Tun of the Sperm Whale. And as that famous great tierce is mystically carved in front, so the whale's vast plaited forehead forms innumerable strange devices for the emblematical adornment of his wondrous tun. Moreover, as that of Heidelburgh was always replenished with the most excellent of the wines of the Rhenish valleys,[3] so the tun of the whale contains by far the most precious of all his oily vintages; namely, the highly-prized spermaceti,[4] in its absolutely pure, limpid, and odoriferous state. Nor is this precious substance found unalloyed in any other part of the creature. Though in life it remains perfectly fluid, yet, upon exposure to the air, after death, it soon begins to concrete; sending forth beautiful crystalline shoots, as when the first thin delicate ice is just forming in water. A large whale's case generally yields about five hundred gallons of sperm, though from unavoidable circumstances, considerable of it is spilled, leaks, and dribbles away, or is otherwise irrecoverably lost in the ticklish business of securing what you can.

I know not with what fine and costly material the Heidelburgh Tun was coated within, but in superlative richness that coating could not possibly

2. The goddess was Isis. A youth who lifted the veil of her statue at Sais, in Egypt, was struck senseless, according to Friedrich Schiller's 1795/6 poem "The Veiled Image at Sais" (which Melville knew in Edward Bulwer-Lytton's translation).

1. Wine cask in the castle cellar at Heidelberg, celebrated for its size (thirty feet in diameter and more than twenty feet high). Melville exaggerates the size of the whale's "case."
2. Quoin is not a Euclidean term. It belongs to the pure nautical mathematics. I know not that it has been defined before. A quoin is a solid which differs from a wedge in having its sharp end formed by the steep inclination of one side, instead of the mutual tapering of both sides. [Melville's note.]
3. Valleys of the Rhine River in Germany.
4. Or sperm; a white, waxy substance used for making ointments and cosmetics as well as fine candles.

have compared with the silken pearl-colored membrane, like the lining of a fine pelisse,[5] forming the inner surface of the Sperm Whale's case.

It will have been seen that the Heidelburgh Tun of the Sperm Whale embraces the entire length of the entire top of the head; and since—as has been elsewhere set forth—the head embraces one third of the whole length of the creature, then setting that length down at eighty feet for a good sized whale, you have more than twenty-six feet for the depth of the tun, when it is lengthwise hoisted up and down against a ship's side.

As in decapitating the whale, the operator's instrument is brought close to the spot where an entrance is subsequently forced into the spermaceti magazine; he has, therefore, to be uncommonly heedful, lest a careless, untimely stroke should invade the sanctuary and wastingly let out its invaluable contents. It is this decapitated end of the head, also, which is at last elevated out of the water, and retained in that position by the enormous cutting tackles, whose hempen combinations, on one side, make quite a wilderness of ropes in that quarter.

Thus much being said, attend now, I pray you, to that marvellous and—in this particular instance—almost fatal operation whereby the Sperm Whale's great Heidelburgh Tun is tapped.

CHAPTER 78

CISTERN AND BUCKETS

Nimble as a cat, Tashtego mounts aloft; and without altering his erect posture, runs straight out upon the overhanging main-yard-arm, to the part where it exactly projects over the hoisted Tun. He has carried with him a light tackle called a whip, consisting of only two parts, travelling through a single-sheaved block. Securing this block, so that it hangs down from the yard-arm, he swings one end of the rope, till it is caught and firmly held by a hand on deck. Then, hand-over-hand, down the other part, the Indian drops through the air, till dexterously he lands on the summit of the head. There—still high elevated above the rest of the company, to whom he vivaciously cries—he seems some Turkish Muezzin[1] calling the good people to prayers from the top of a tower. A short-handled sharp spade being sent up to him, he diligently searches for the proper place to begin breaking into the Tun. In this business he proceeds very heedfully, like a treasure-hunter in some old house, sounding the walls to find where the gold is masoned in. By the time this cautious search is over, a stout iron-bound bucket, precisely like a well-bucket, has been attached to one end of the whip; while the other end, being stretched across the deck, is there held by two or three alert hands. These last now hoist the bucket within grasp of the Indian, to whom another person has reached up a very long pole. Inserting this pole into the bucket, Tashtego downward guides the bucket into the Tun, till it entirely disappears; then giving the word to the seamen at the whip, up comes the bucket again, all bubbling like a dairy-maid's pail of new milk. Carefully lowered from its height, the full-freighted vessel is caught by an appointed hand, and quickly emptied into

5. A lightweight fur-lined coat.
1. Muslim crier to hourly prayers.

a large tub. Then remounting aloft, it again goes through the same round until the deep cistern will yield no more. Towards the end, Tashtego has to ram his long pole harder and harder, and deeper and deeper into the Tun, until some twenty feet of the pole have gone down.

Now, the people of the Pequod had been baling some time in this way; several tubs had been filled with the fragrant sperm; when all at once a queer accident happened. Whether it was that Tashtego, that wild Indian, was so heedless and reckless as to let go for a moment his one-handed hold on the great cabled tackles suspending the head; or whether the place where he stood was so treacherous and oozy; or whether the Evil One himself would have it to fall out so, without stating his particular reasons; how it was exactly, there is no telling now; but, on a sudden, as the eightieth or ninetieth bucket came suckingly up—my God! poor Tashtego—like the twin reciprocating bucket in a veritable well, dropped head-foremost down into this great Tun of Heidelberg, and with a horrible oily gurgling, went clean out of sight!

"Man overboard!" cried Daggoo, who amid the general consternation first came to his senses. "Swing the bucket this way!" and putting one foot into it, so as the better to secure his slippery hand-hold on the whip itself, the hoisters ran him high up to the top of the head, almost before Tashtego could have reached its interior bottom. Meantime, there was a terrible tumult. Looking over the side, they saw the before lifeless head throbbing and heaving just below the surface of the sea, as if that moment seized with some momentous idea; whereas it was only the poor Indian unconsciously revealing by those struggles the perilous depth to which he had sunk.

At this instant, while Daggoo, on the summit of the head, was clearing the whip—which had somehow got foul of the great cutting tackles—a sharp cracking noise was heard; and to the unspeakable horror of all, one of the two enormous hooks suspending the head tore out, and with a vast vibration the enormous mass sideways swung, till the drunk ship reeled and shook as if smitten by an iceberg. The one remaining hook, upon which the entire strain now depended, seemed every instant to be on the point of giving way; an event still more likely from the violent motions of the head.

"Come down, come down!" yelled the seamen to Daggoo, but with one hand holding on to the heavy tackles, so that if the head should drop, he would still remain suspended; the negro having cleared the foul line, rammed down the bucket into the now collapsed well, meaning that the buried harpooneer should grasp it, and so be hoisted out.

"In heaven's name, man," cried Stubb, "are you ramming home a cartridge there?—Avast! How will that help him; jamming that iron-bound bucket on top of his head? Avast, will ye!"

"Stand clear of the tackle!" cried a voice like the bursting of a rocket.

Almost in the same instant, with a thunder-boom, the enormous mass dropped into the sea, like Niagara's Table-Rock[2] into the whirlpool; the suddenly relieved hull rolled away from it, to far down her glittering copper; and all caught their breath, as half swinging—now over the sailors' heads, and now over the water—Daggoo, through a thick mist of spray, was dimly beheld clinging to the pendulous tackles, while poor, buried-alive Tashtego was sinking utterly down to the bottom of the sea! But

2. A ledge beside the Falls that collapsed in June 1850, during the composition of *Moby-Dick*.

hardly had the blinding vapor cleared away, when a naked figure with a boarding-sword in its hand, was for one swift moment seen hovering over the bulwarks. The next, a loud splash announced that my brave Queequeg had dived to the rescue. One packed rush was made to the side, and every eye counted every ripple, as moment followed moment, and no sign of either the sinker or the diver could be seen. Some hands now jumped into a boat alongside, and pushed a little off from the ship.

"Ha! ha!" cried Daggoo, all at once, from his now quiet, swinging perch overhead; and looking further off from the side, we saw an arm thrust upright from the blue waves; a sight strange to see, as an arm thrust forth from the grass over a grave.

"Both! both!—it is both!"—cried Daggoo again with a joyful shout; and soon after, Queequeg was seen boldly striking out with one hand, and with the other clutching the long hair of the Indian. Drawn into the waiting boat, they were quickly brought to the deck; but Tashtego was long in coming to, and Queequeg did not look very brisk.

Now, how had this noble rescue been accomplished? Why, diving after the slowly descending head, Queequeg with his keen sword had made side lunges near its bottom, so as to scuttle a large hole there; then dropping his sword, had thrust his long arm far inwards and upwards, and so hauled out our poor Tash by the head. He averred, that upon first thrusting in for him, a leg was presented; but well knowing that that was not as it ought to be, and might occasion great trouble;—he had thrust back the leg, and by a dexterous heave and toss, had wrought a somerset upon the Indian; so that with the next trial, he came forth in the good old way—head foremost.[3] As for the great head itself, that was doing as well as could be expected.

And thus, through the courage and great skill in obstetrics of Queequeg, the deliverance, or rather, delivery of Tashtego, was successfully accomplished, in the teeth, too, of the most untoward and apparently hopeless impediments; which is a lesson by no means to be forgotten. Midwifery should be taught in the same course with fencing and boxing, riding and rowing.

I know that this queer adventure of the Gay-Header's will be sure to seem incredible to some landsmen, though they themselves may have either seen or heard of some one's falling into a cistern ashore; an accident which not seldom happens, and with much less reason too than the Indian's, considering the exceeding slipperiness of the curb of the Sperm Whale's well.

But, peradventure, it may be sagaciously urged, how is this? We thought the tissued, infiltrated head of the Sperm Whale, was the lightest and most corky part about him; and yet thou makest it sink in an element of a far greater specific gravity than itself. We have thee there. Not at all, but I have ye; for at the time poor Tash fell in, the case had been nearly emptied of its lighter contents, leaving little but the dense tendinous wall of the well—a double welded, hammered substance, as I have before said, much heavier than the sea water, and a lump of which sinks in it like lead almost. But the tendency to rapid sinking in this substance was in the present instance materially counteracted by the other parts of the head remaining undetached from it, so that it sank very slowly and deliberately indeed,

3. Normal position for delivery. Sometimes the midwife or doctor (like Queequeg) must turn the baby in the womb to achieve this position; here, the whale's head (said to be doing well afterward) is the "mother."

affording Queequeg a fair chance for performing his agile obstetrics on the run, as you may say. Yes, it was a running delivery, so it was.

Now, had Tashtego perished in that head, it had been a very precious perishing; smothered in the very whitest and daintiest of fragrant spermaceti; coffined, hearsed, and tombed in the secret inner chamber and sanctum sanctorum[4] of the whale. Only one sweeter end can readily be recalled—the delicious death of an Ohio honey-hunter, who seeking honey in the crotch of a hollow tree, found such exceeding store of it, that leaning too far over, it sucked him in, so that he died embalmed. How many, think ye, have likewise fallen into Plato's honey head, and sweetly perished there?

CHAPTER 79

THE PRAIRE

To scan the lines of his face, or feel the bumps on the head of this Leviathan; this is a thing which no Physiognomist or Phrenologist has as yet undertaken. Such an enterprise would seem almost as hopeful as for Lavater to have scrutinized the wrinkles on the Rock of Gibraltar, or for Gall to have mounted a ladder and manipulated the Dome of the Pantheon.[1] Still, in that famous work of his, Lavater[2] not only treats of the various faces of men, but also attentively studies the faces of horses, birds, serpents, and fish; and dwells in detail upon the modifications of expression discernible therein. Nor have Gall and his disciple Spurzheim[3] failed to throw out some hints touching the phrenological characteristics of other beings than man. Therefore, though I am but ill qualified for a pioneer, in the application of these two semi-sciences to the whale, I will do my endeavor. I try all things; I achieve what I can.

Physiognomically regarded, the Sperm Whale is an anomalous creature. He has no proper nose. And since the nose is the central and most conspicuous of the features; and since it perhaps most modifies and finally controls their combined expression; hence it would seem that its entire absence, as an external appendage, must very largely affect the countenance of the whale. For as in landscape gardening, a spire, cupola, monument, or tower of some sort, is deemed almost indispensable to the completion of the scene; so no face can be physiognomically in keeping without the elevated open-work belfry of the nose. Dash the nose from Phidias's marble Jove,[4] and what a sorry remainder! Nevertheless, Leviathan is of so mighty a magnitude, all his proportions are so stately, that the same deficiency which in the sculptured Jove were hideous, in him is no blemish at all. Nay, it is an added grandeur. A nose to the whale would have been impertinent. As on your physiognomical voyage you sail round his vast head in your jolly boat, your noble conceptions of him are never

4. Holy of holies, the sacred innermost chamber of a temple.
1. The great domed temple in Rome, built during the Roman Empire and still standing.
2. Johann Lataver (1741–1801), Swiss physiognomist who studied human character as revealed in the contours of the face.
3. The more recent phrenologists Franz Joseph Gall (1758–1828) and Johann Spurzheim (1776–1832) read the bumps on the skull. Both pseudosciences were widely practiced and credited in the mid-19th century.
4. The statue of Zeus (Jove) by this Greek sculptor (5th century B.C.E.) no longer survives, but Melville's comments apply to any great classical statue.

insulted by the reflection that he has a nose to be pulled.[5] A pestilent conceit, which so often will insist upon obtruding even when beholding the mightiest royal beadle[6] on his throne.

In some particulars, perhaps the most imposing physiognomical view to be had of the Sperm Whale, is that of the full front of his head. This aspect is sublime.

In thought, a fine human brow is like the East when troubled with the morning. In the repose of the pasture, the curled brow of the bull has a touch of the grand in it. Pushing heavy cannon up mountain defiles, the elephant's brow is majestic. Human or animal, the mystical brow is as that great golden seal affixed by the German emperors to their decrees. It signifies—"Good:[7] done this day by my hand." But in most creatures, nay in man himself, very often the brow is but a mere strip of alpine land lying along the snow line. Few are the foreheads which like Shakspeare's or Melancthon's[8] rise so high, and descend so low, that the eyes themselves seem clear, eternal, tideless mountain lakes; and all above them in the forehead's wrinkles, you seem to track the antlered thoughts descending there to drink, as the Highland hunters track the snow prints of the deer. But in the great Sperm Whale, this high and mighty god-like dignity inherent in the brow is so immensely amplified, that gazing on it, in that full front view, you feel the Deity and the dread powers more forcibly than in beholding any other object in living nature. For you see no one point precisely; not one distinct feature is revealed; no nose, eyes, ears, or mouth; no face; he has none, proper; nothing but that one broad firmament of a forehead, pleated with riddles; dumbly lowering with the doom of boats, and ships, and men. Nor, in profile, does this wondrous brow diminish; though that way viewed, its grandeur does not domineer upon you so. In profile, you plainly perceive that horizontal, semi-crescentic depression in the forehead's middle, which, in man, is Lavater's mark of genius.

But how? Genius in the Sperm Whale? Has the Sperm Whale ever written a book, spoken a speech? No, his great genius is declared in his doing nothing particular to prove it. It is moreover declared in his pyramidical silence. And this reminds me that had the great Sperm Whale been known to the young Orient World, he would have been deified by their child-magian thoughts. They deified the crocodile of the Nile, because the crocodile is tongueless; and the Sperm Whale has no tongue, or at least it is so exceedingly small, as to be incapable of protrusion. If hereafter any highly cultured, poetical nation shall lure back to their birth-right, the merry May-day gods of old; and livingly enthrone them again in the now egotistical sky; on the now unhaunted hill; then be sure, exalted to Jove's high seat, the great Sperm Whale shall lord it.[9]

Champollion[1] deciphered the wrinkled granite hieroglyphics. But there is no Champollion to decipher the Egypt of every man's and every being's

5. Gesture of disrespect.
6. A minor ceremonial official; here, a king, disrespectfully seen as merely a beadle, though the most powerful one. This line survived the British censor of *The Whale*, who gave the entire book a quick and quite thorough scanning to remove any such disrespect toward royalty.
7. *God* is emended here to "Good," meaning "finished" or "accomplished."
8. Philipp Melanchthon (1497–1560), German Protestant reformer.
9. The great sperm whale, tongueless as the deified crocodile, will then displace Jove (or the monotheistic Christian God).
1. Jean Françoise Champollion (1790–1832), French Egyptologist who deciphered the Rosetta Stone, allowing him to read the hieroglyphs—in Melville's youth, still celebrated as an astounding historical breakthrough.

face. Physiognomy, like every other human science, is but a passing fable. If then, Sir William Jones,[2] who read in thirty languages, could not read the simplest peasant's face in its profounder and more subtle meanings, how may unlettered Ishmael hope to read the awful Chaldee[3] of the Sperm Whale's brow? I but put that brow before you. Read it if you can.

CHAPTER 80

THE NUT

If the Sperm Whale be physiognomically a Sphinx, to the phrenologist his brain seems that geometrical circle which it is impossible to square.

In the full-grown creature the skull will measure at least twenty feet in length. Unhinge the lower jaw, and the side view of this skull is as the side view of a moderately inclined plane resting throughout on a level base. But in life—as we have elsewhere seen—this inclined plane is angularly filled up, and almost squared by the enormous superincumbent mass of the junk and sperm. At the high end the skull forms a crater to bed that part of the mass; while under the long floor of this crater—in another cavity seldom exceeding ten inches in length and as many in depth—reposes the mere handful of this monster's brain. The brain is at least twenty feet from his apparent forehead in life; it is hidden away behind its vast outworks, like the innermost citadel within the amplified fortifications of Quebec. So like a choice casket is it secreted in him, that I have known some whalemen who peremptorily deny that the Sperm Whale has any other brain than that palpable semblance of one formed by the cubic-yards of his sperm magazine. Lying in strange folds, courses, and convolutions, to their apprehensions, it seems more in keeping with the idea of his general might to regard that mystic part of him as the seat of his intelligence.

It is plain, then, that phrenologically the head of this Leviathan, in the creature's living intact state, is an entire delusion. As for his true brain, you can then see no indications of it, nor feel any. The whale, like all things that are mighty, wears a false brow to the common world.

If you unload his skull of its spermy heaps and then take a rear view of its rear end, which is the high end, you will be struck by its resemblance to the human skull, beheld in the same situation, and from the same point of view. Indeed, place this reversed skull (scaled down to the human magnitude) among a plate[1] of men's skulls, and you would involuntarily confound it with them; and remarking the depressions on one part of its summit, in phrenological phrase you would say—This man had no self-esteem, and no veneration. And by those negations, considered along with the affirmative fact of his prodigious bulk and power, you can best form to yourself the truest, though not the most exhilarating conception of what the most exalted potency is.

But if from the comparative dimensions of the whale's proper brain, you deem it incapable of being adequately charted, then I have another idea for you. If you attentively regard almost any quadruped's spine, you will

2. Sir William Jones (1746–1794), English Orientalist. Often referred to as the father of comparative linguistics, Jones was a scholar of Persian, Arabic, Hebrew, Sanskrit, Greek, Latin, and modern European languages.
3. The language of ancient Babylonian inscriptions.
1. A page of illustrations.

be struck with the resemblance of its vertebræ to a strung necklace of dwarfed skulls, all bearing rudimental resemblance to the skull proper. It is a German conceit, that the vertebræ are absolutely undeveloped skulls. But the curious external resemblance, I take it the Germans were not the first men to perceive. A foreign friend[2] once pointed it out to me, in the skeleton of a foe he had slain, and with the vertebræ of which he was inlaying, in a sort of basso-relievo, the beaked prow of his canoe. Now, I consider that the phrenologists have omitted an important thing in not pushing their investigations from the cerebellum through the spinal canal. For I believe that much of a man's character will be found betokened in his backbone. I would rather feel your spine than your skull, whoever you are. A thin joist of a spine never yet upheld a full and noble soul. I rejoice in my spine, as in the firm audacious staff of that flag which I fling half out to the world.[3]

Apply this spinal branch of phrenology to the Sperm Whale. His cranial cavity is continuous with the first neck-vertebra; and in that vertebra the bottom of the spinal canal will measure ten inches across, being eight in height, and of a triangular figure with the base downwards. As it passes through the remaining vertebræ the canal tapers in size, but for a considerable distance remains of large capacity. Now, of course, this canal is filled with much the same strangely fibrous substance—the spinal cord—as the brain; and directly communicates with the brain. And what is still more, for many feet after emerging from the brain's cavity, the spinal cord remains of an undecreasing girth, almost equal to that of the brain. Under all these circumstances, would it be unreasonable to survey and map out the whale's spine phrenologically? For, viewed in this light, the wonderful comparative smallness of his brain proper is more than compensated by the wonderful comparative magnitude of his spinal cord.

But leaving this hint to operate as it may with the phrenologists, I would merely assume the spinal theory for a moment, in reference to the Sperm Whale's hump. This august hump, if I mistake not, rises over one of the larger vertebræ, and is, therefore, in some sort, the outer convex mould of it. From its relative situation then, I should call this high hump the organ of firmness or indomitableness in the Sperm Whale. And that the great monster is indomitable, you will yet have reason to know.

CHAPTER 81

THE PEQUOD MEETS THE VIRGIN

The predestinated day arrived, and we duly met the ship Jungfrau, Derick De Deer, master, of Bremen.[1]

At one time the greatest whaling people in the world, the Dutch and Germans are now among the least; but here and there at very wide intervals of latitude and longitude, you still occasionally meet with their flag in the Pacific.

2. A South Sea one, such as Queequeg.
3. The Melvilles took posture seriously, and even in his last years observers commented on Melville's erect strides, but "half out" has not been satisfactorily explicated and may not be just what he wrote.
1. A north German port. "Jungfrau": virgin (German).

For some reason, the Jungfrau seemed quite eager to pay her respects. While yet some distance from the Pequod, she rounded to, and dropping a boat, her captain was impelled towards us, impatiently standing in the bows instead of the stern.

"What has he in his hand there?" cried Starbuck, pointing to something wavingly held by the German. "Impossible!—a lamp-feeder!"

"Not that," said Stubb, "no, no, it's a coffee-pot, Mr. Starbuck; he's coming off to make us our coffee, is the Yarman; don't you see that big tin can there alongside of him?—that's his boiling water. Oh! he's all right, is the Yarman."

"Go along with you," cried Flask, "it's a lamp-feeder and an oil-can. He's out of oil, and has come a-begging."

However curious it may seem for an oil-ship to be borrowing oil on the whale-ground, and however much it may invertedly contradict the old proverb about carrying coals to Newcastle,[2] yet sometimes such a thing really happens; and in the present case Captain Derick De Deer did indubitably conduct a lamp-feeder as Flask did declare.

As he mounted the deck, Ahab abruptly accosted him, without at all heeding what he had in his hand; but in his broken lingo, the German soon evinced his complete ignorance of the White Whale; immediately turning the conversation to his lamp-feeder and oil can, with some remarks touching his having to turn into his hammock at night in profound darkness—his last drop of Bremen oil being gone, and not a single flying-fish yet captured to supply the deficiency; concluding by hinting that his ship was indeed what in the Fishery is technically called a *clean* one (that is, an empty one), well deserving the name of Jungfrau or the Virgin.

His necessities supplied, Derick departed; but he had not gained his ship's side, when whales were almost simultaneously raised from the mast-heads of both vessels; and so eager for the chase was Derick, that without pausing to put his oil-can and lamp-feeder aboard, he slewed round his boat and made after the leviathan lamp-feeders.

Now, the game having risen to leeward, he and the other three German boats that soon followed him, had considerably the start of the Pequod's keels. There were eight whales, an average pod. Aware of their danger, they were going all abreast with great speed straight before the wind, rubbing their flanks as closely as so many spans of horses in harness. They left a great, wide wake, as though continually unrolling a great wide parchment upon the sea.

Full in this rapid wake, and many fathoms in the rear, swam a huge, humped old bull, which by his comparatively slow progress, as well as by the unusual yellowish incrustations over-growing him, seemed afflicted with the jaundice, or some other infirmity. Whether this whale belonged to the pod in advance, seemed questionable; for it is not customary for such venerable leviathans to be at all social. Nevertheless, he stuck to their wake, though indeed their back water must have retarded him, because the white-bone or swell at his broad muzzle was a dashed one, like the swell formed when two hostile currents meet. His spout was short, slow, and laborious; coming forth with a choking sort of gush, and spending itself in torn shreds, followed by strange subterranean commotions in him,

2. Redundant (proverbial) because coal is mined near that English city on the North Sea.

which seemed to have egress at his other buried extremity, causing the waters behind him to upbubble.

"Who's got some paregoric?"[3] said Stubb, "he has the stomach-ache, I'm afraid. Lord, think of having half an acre of stomach-ache! Adverse winds are holding mad Christmas in him, boys. It's the first foul wind I ever knew to blow from astern; but look, did ever whale yaw so before? it must be, he's lost his tiller."

As an overladen Indiaman bearing down the Hindostan coast with a deck load of frightened horses, careens, buries, rolls, and wallows on her way; so did this old whale heave his aged bulk, and now and then partly turning over on his cumbrous rib-ends, expose the cause of his devious wake in the unnatural stump of his starboard fin. Whether he had lost that fin in battle, or had been born without it, it were hard to say.

"Only wait a bit, old chap, and I'll give ye a sling for that wounded arm," cried cruel Flask, pointing to the whale-line near him.

"Mind he don't sling thee with it," cried Starbuck. "Give way, or the German will have him."

With one intent all the combined rival boats were pointed for this one fish, because not only was he the largest, and therefore the most valuable whale, but he was nearest to them, and the other whales were going with such great velocity, moreover, as almost to defy pursuit for the time. At this juncture, the Pequod's keels had shot by the three German boats last lowered; but from the great start he had had, Derick's boat still led the chase, though every moment neared by his foreign rivals. The only thing they feared, was, that from being already so nigh to his mark, he would be enabled to dart his iron before they could completely overtake and pass him. As for Derick, he seemed quite confident that this would be the case, and occasionally with a deriding gesture shook his lamp-feeder at the other boats.

"The ungracious and ungrateful dog!" cried Starbuck; "he mocks and dares me with the very poor-box[4] I filled for him not five minutes ago!"—then in his old intense whisper—"give way, greyhounds! Dog to it!"

"I tell ye what it is, men"—cried Stubb to his crew—"It's against my religion to get mad; but I'd like to eat that villanous Yarman—Pull—wont ye? Are ye going to let that rascal beat ye? Do ye love brandy? A hogshead of brandy, then, to the best man. Come, why don't some of ye burst a blood-vessel? Who's that been dropping an anchor overboard—we don't budge an inch—we're becalmed. Halloo, here's grass growing in the boat's bottom—and by the Lord, the mast there's budding. This won't do, boys. Look at that Yarman! The short and long of it is, men, will ye spit fire or not?"

"Oh! see the suds he makes!" cried Flask, dancing up and down—"What a hump—Oh, *do* pile on the beef—lays like a log! Oh! my lads, *do* spring—slap-jacks and quohogs for supper, you know, my lads—baked clams and muffins—oh, *do*, *do*, spring—he's a hundred barreler—don't lose him now—don't, oh, *don't!*—see that Yarman—Oh! won't ye pull for your duff, my lads—such a sog! such a sogger![5] Don't ye love sperm? There goes three thousand dollars, men!—a bank!—a whole bank! The bank of England![6]—Oh, *do, do, do!*—What's that Yarman about now?"

3. Then legal, powdered opium used as an antidiarrheal and to pacify colicky children.
4. Box for donating alms for the poor.
5. Something large and heavy. "Sog": a large whale.
6. As we would say "Fort Knox."

At this moment Derick was in the act of pitching his lamp-feeder at the advancing boats, and also his oil-can; perhaps with the double view of retarding his rivals' way, and at the same time economically accelerating his own by the momentary impetus of the backward toss.

"The unmannerly Dutch dogger!" cried Stubb. "Pull now, men, like fifty thousand line-of-battle-ship loads of red-haired devils. What d'ye say, Tashtego; are you the man to snap your spine in two-and-twenty pieces for the honor of old Gay-head? What d'ye say?"

"I say, pull like god-dam,"—cried the Indian.

Fiercely but evenly, incited by the taunts of the German, the Pequod's three boats now began ranging almost abreast; and, so disposed, momentarily neared him. In that fine, loose, chivalrous attitude of the headsman when drawing near to his prey, the three mates stood up proudly, occasionally backing the after oarsman with an exhilarating cry of, "There she slides, now! Hurrah for the white-ash breeze![7] Down with the Yarman! Sail over him!"

But so decided an original start had Derick had, that spite of all their gallantry, he would have proved the victor in this race, had not a righteous judgment descended upon him in a crab which caught the blade of his midship oarsman.[8] While this clumsy lubber was striving to free his white-ash, and while, in consequence, Derick's boat was nigh to capsizing, and he thundering away at his men in a mighty rage;—that was a good time for Starbuck, Stubb, and Flask. With a shout, they took a mortal start forwards, and slantingly ranged up on the German's quarter. An instant more, and all four boats were diagonally in the whale's immediate wake, while stretching from them, on both sides, was the foaming swell that he made.

It was a terrific, most pitiable, and maddening sight. The whale was now going head out, and sending his spout before him in a continual tormented jet; while his one poor fin beat his side in an agony of fright. Now to this hand, now to that, he yawed[9] in his faltering flight, and still at every billow that he broke, he spasmodically sank in the sea, or sideways rolled towards the sky his one beating fin. So have I seen a bird with clipped wing, making affrighted broken circles in the air, vainly striving to escape the piratical hawks. But the bird has a voice, and with plaintive cries will make known her fear; but the fear of this vast dumb brute of the sea, was chained up and enchanted in him; he had no voice, save that choking respiration through his spiracle, and this made the sight of him unspeakably pitiable; while still, in his amazing bulk, portcullis jaw, and omnipotent tail, there was enough to appal the stoutest man who so pitied.

Seeing now that but a very few moments more would give the Pequod's boats the advantage, and rather than be thus foiled of his game, Derick chose to hazard what to him must have seemed a most unusually long dart, ere the last chance would for ever escape.

But no sooner did his harpooneer stand up for the stroke, than all three tigers—Queequeg, Tashtego, Daggoo—instinctively sprang to their feet, and standing in a diagonal row, simultaneously pointed their barbs; and darted over the head of the German harpooneer, their three Nantucket

7. Caused by swiftly moving oars (made of white ash wood).
8. To "catch" a crab in rowing is to manage the oar so clumsily that it gets caught in the water, as by a wave on the backstroke, as if an unseen crab had caught it.
9. Wallowed.

irons entered the whale. Blinding vapors of foam and white-fire! The three boats, in the first fury of the whale's headlong rush, bumped the German's aside with such force, that both Derick and his baffled harpooneer were spilled out, and sailed over by the three flying keels.

"Don't be afraid, my butter-boxes," cried Stubb, casting a passing glance upon them as he shot by; "ye'll be picked up presently—all right—I saw some sharks astern—St. Bernard's dogs, you know—relieve distressed travellers. Hurrah! this is the way to sail now. Every keel a sun-beam! Hurrah!—Here we go like three tin kettles at the tail of a mad cougar! This puts me in mind of fastening to an elephant in a tilbury on a plain—makes the wheel-spokes fly, boys, when you fasten to him that way; and there's danger of being pitched out too, when you strike a hill. Hurrah! this is the way a fellow feels when he's going to Davy Jones[1]—all a rush down an endless inclined plane! Hurrah! this whale carries the everlasting mail!"

But the monster's run was a brief one. Giving a sudden gasp, he tumultuously sounded. With a grating rush, the three lines flew round the loggerheads with such a force as to gouge deep grooves in them; while so fearful were the harpooneers that this rapid sounding would soon exhaust the lines, that using all their dexterous might, they caught repeated smoking turns with the rope to hold on; till at last—owing to the perpendicular strain from the lead-lined chocks of the boats, whence the three ropes went straight down into the blue—the gunwales of the bows were almost even with the water, while the three sterns tilted high in the air. And the whale soon ceasing to sound, for some time they remained in that attitude, fearful of expending more line, though the position was a little ticklish. But though boats have been taken down and lost in this way, yet it is this "holding on," as it is called; this hooking up by the sharp barbs of his live flesh from the back; this it is that often torments the Leviathan into soon rising again to meet the sharp lance of his foes. Yet not to speak of the peril of the thing, it is to be doubted whether this course is always the best; for it is but reasonable to presume, that the longer the stricken whale stays under water, the more he is exhausted. Because, owing to the enormous surface of him—in a full grown sperm whale something less than 2000 square feet—the pressure of the water is immense. We all know what an astonishing atmospheric weight we ourselves stand up under; even here, above-ground, in the air; how vast, then, the burden of a whale, bearing on his back a column of two hundred fathoms of ocean! It must at least equal the weight of fifty atmospheres. One whaleman has estimated it at the weight of twenty line-of-battle ships, with all their guns, and stores, and men on board.

As the three boats lay there on that gently rolling sea, gazing down into its eternal blue noon; and as not a single groan or cry of any sort, nay, not so much as a ripple or a bubble came up from its depths; what landsman would have thought, that beneath all that silence and placidity, the utmost monster of the seas was writhing and wrenching in agony! Not eight inches of perpendicular rope were visible at the bows. Seems it credible that by three such thin threads the great Leviathan was suspended like the big weight to an eight day clock. Suspended? and to what? To three bits of board.

1. From "Duppy Jonah," the ghost of Jonah. In nautical folklore, spirit devil who collects drowned souls and miscellaneous treasures into his locker at the bottom of the sea.

Is this the creature of whom it was once so triumphantly said—"Canst thou fill his skin with barbed irons? or his head with fish-spears? The sword of him that layeth at him cannot hold, the spear, the dart, nor the habergeon: he esteemeth iron as straw; the arrow cannot make him flee; darts are counted as stubble; he laugheth at the shaking of a spear!"[2] This the creature? this he? Oh! that unfulfilments should follow the prophets. For with the strength of a thousand thighs in his tail, Leviathan had run his head under the mountains of the sea, to hide him from the Pequod's fish-spears!

In that sloping afternoon sunlight, the shadows that the three boats sent down beneath the surface, must have been long enough and broad enough to shade half Xerxes' army. Who can tell how appalling to the wounded whale must have been such huge phantoms flitting over his head!

"Stand by, men; he stirs," cried Starbuck, as the three lines suddenly vibrated in the water, distinctly conducting upwards to them, as by magnetic wires, the life and death throbs of the whale, so that every oarsman felt them in his seat. The next moment, relieved in great part from the downward strain at the bows, the boats gave a sudden bounce upwards, as a small ice-field will, when a dense herd of white bears are scared from it into the sea.

"Haul in! Haul in!" cried Starbuck again; "he's rising."

The lines, of which, hardly an instant before, not one hand's breadth could have been gained, were now in long quick coils flung back all dripping into the boats, and soon the whale broke water within two ship's lengths of the hunters.

His motions plainly denoted his extreme exhaustion. In most land animals there are certain valves or flood-gates in many of their veins, whereby when wounded, the blood is in some degree at least instantly shut off in certain directions. Not so with the whale; one of whose peculiarities it is, to have an entire nonvalvular structure of the blood-vessels, so that when pierced even by so small a point as a harpoon, a deadly drain is at once begun upon his whole arterial system; and when this is heightened by the extraordinary pressure of water at a great distance below the surface, his life may be said to pour from him in incessant streams. Yet so vast is the quantity of blood in him, and so distant and numerous its interior fountains, that he will keep thus bleeding and bleeding for a considerable period; even as in a drought a river will flow, whose source is in the wellsprings of far-off and undiscernible hills. Even now, when the boats pulled upon this whale, and perilously drew over his swaying flukes, and the lances were darted into him, they were followed by steady jets from the new made wound, which kept continually playing, while the natural spout-hole in his head was only at intervals, however rapid, sending its affrighted moisture into the air. From this last vent no blood yet came, because no vital part of him had thus far been struck. His life, as they significantly call it, was untouched.

As the boats now more closely surrounded him, the whole upper part of his form, with much of it that is ordinarily submerged, was plainly revealed. His eyes, or rather the places where his eyes had been, were beheld. As strange misgrown masses gather in the knot-holes of the noblest

2. Job 41.7, 26–29.

oaks when prostrate, so from the points which the whale's eyes had once occupied, now protruded blind bulbs, horribly pitiable to see. But pity there was none. For all his old age, and his one arm, and his blind eyes, he must die the death and be murdered, in order to light the gay bridals and other merry-makings of men, and also to illuminate the solemn churches that preach unconditional inoffensiveness by all to all. Still rolling in his blood, at last he partially disclosed a strangely discolored bunch or protuberance, the size of a bushel, low down on the flank.

"A nice spot," cried Flask; "just let me prick him there once."

"Avast!" cried Starbuck, "there's no need of that!"

But humane Starbuck was too late. At the instant of the dart an ulcerous jet shot from this cruel wound, and goaded by it into more than sufferable anguish, the whale now spouting thick blood, with swift fury blindly darted at the craft, bespattering them and their glorying crews all over with showers of gore, capsizing Flask's boat and marring the bows. It was his death stroke. For, by this time, so spent was he by loss of blood, that he helplessly rolled away from the wreck he had made; lay panting on his side, impotently flapped with his stumped fin, then over and over slowly revolved like a waning world; turned up the white secrets of his belly; lay like a log, and died. It was most piteous, that last expiring spout. As when by unseen hands the water is gradually drawn off from some mighty fountain, and with half-stifled melancholy gurglings the spray-column lowers and lowers to the ground—so the last long dying spout of the whale.[3]

Soon, while the crews were awaiting the arrival of the ship, the body showed symptoms of sinking with all its treasures unrifled. Immediately, by Starbuck's orders, lines were secured to it at different points, so that ere long every boat was a buoy; the sunken whale being suspended a few inches beneath them by the cords. By very heedful management, when the ship drew nigh, the whale was transferred to her side, and was strongly secured there by the stiffest fluke-chains, for it was plain that unless artificially upheld, the body would at once sink to the bottom.

It so chanced that almost upon first cutting into him with the spade, the entire length of a corroded harpoon was found imbedded in his flesh, on the lower part of the bunch before described. But as the stumps of harpoons are frequently found in the dead bodies of captured whales, with the flesh perfectly healed around them, and no prominence of any kind to denote their place; therefore, there must needs have been some other unknown reason in the present case fully to account for the ulceration alluded to. But still more curious was the fact of a lance-head of stone being found in him, not far from the buried iron, the flesh perfectly firm about it. Who had darted that stone lance? And when? It might have been darted by some Nor' West Indian long before America was discovered.

What other marvels might have been rummaged out of this monstrous cabinet there is no telling. But a sudden stop was put to further discoveries, by the ship's being unprecedentedly dragged over sideways to the sea, owing to the body's immensely increasing tendency to sink. However,

3. See online Steven Olsen-Smith, "Introduction to Melville's Marginalia in Thomas Beale's *The Natural History of the Sperm Whale*," http://melvillesmarginalia.org/. Beale (182.26–31) describes a whale's death throes. In the margin, Olsen-Smith says, Melville "composed the rough draft of an epic simile": "As when the water issuing [—?—] off from a fountain [—?—] & slowly lowers—so the dying spout of the whale."

Starbuck, who had the ordering of affairs, hung on to it to the last; hung on to it so resolutely, indeed, that when at length the ship would have been capsized, if still persisting in locking arms with the body; then, when the command was given to break clear from it, such was the immovable strain upon the timber-heads to which the fluke-chains and cables were fastened, that it was impossible to cast them off. Meantime everything in the Pequod was aslant. To cross to the other side of the deck was like walking up the steep gabled roof of a house. The ship groaned and gasped. Many of the ivory inlayings of her bulwarks and cabins were started from their places, by the unnatural dislocation. In vain handspikes and crows[4] were brought to bear upon the immovable fluke-chains, to pry them adrift from the timber-heads; and so low had the whale now settled that the submerged ends could not be at all approached, while every moment whole tons of ponderosity seemed added to the sinking bulk, and the ship seemed on the point of going over.

"Hold on, hold on, won't ye?" cried Stubb to the body, "don't be in such a devil of a hurry to sink! By thunder, men, we must do something or go for it. No use prying there; avast, I say with your handspikes, and run one of ye for a prayer book and a penknife, and cut the big chains."

"Knife? Aye, aye," cried Queequeg, and seizing the carpenter's heavy hatchet, he leaned out of a porthole, and steel to iron, began slashing at the largest fluke-chains. But a few strokes, full of sparks, were given, when the exceeding strain effected the rest. With a terrific snap, every fastening went adrift; the ship righted, the carcase sank.

Now, this occasional inevitable sinking of the recently killed Sperm Whale is a very curious thing; nor has any fisherman yet adequately accounted for it. Usually the dead Sperm Whale floats with great buoyancy, with its side or belly considerably elevated above the surface. If the only whales that thus sank were old, meagre, and broken-hearted creatures, their pads of lard diminished and all their bones heavy and rheumatic; then you might with some reason assert that this sinking is caused by an uncommon specific gravity in the fish so sinking, consequent upon this absence of buoyant matter in him. But it is not so. For young whales, in the highest health, and swelling with noble aspirations, prematurely cut off in the warm flush and May of life, with all their panting lard about them; even these brawny, buoyant heroes do sometimes sink.

Be it said, however, that the Sperm Whale is far less liable to this accident than any other species. Where one of that sort go down, twenty Right Whales do. This difference in the species is no doubt imputable in no small degree to the greater quantity of bone in the Right Whale; his Venetian blinds alone sometimes weighing more than a ton; from this incumbrance the Sperm Whale is wholly free. But there are instances where, after the lapse of many hours or several days, the sunken whale again rises, more buoyant than in life. But the reason of this is obvious. Gases are generated in him; he swells to a prodigious magnitude; becomes a sort of animal balloon. A line-of-battle ship could hardly keep him under then. In the Shore Whaling, on soundings, among the Bays of New Zealand, when a Right Whale gives token of sinking, they fasten buoys to him, with plenty of rope; so that when the body has gone down, they know where to look for it when it shall have ascended again.

4. I.e., crowbars, for prying.

It was not long after the sinking of the body that a cry was heard from the Pequod's mast-heads, announcing that the Jungfrau was again lowering her boats; though the only spout in sight was that of a Fin-Back, belonging to the species of uncapturable whales, because of its incredible power of swimming. Nevertheless, the Fin-Back's spout is so similar to the Sperm Whale's, that by unskilful fishermen it is often mistaken for it. And consequently Derick and all his host were now in valiant chase of this unnearable brute. The Virgin crowding all sail, made after her four young keels, and thus they all disappeared far to leeward, still in bold, hopeful chase.

Oh! many are the Fin-Backs, and many are the Dericks, my friend.

CHAPTER 82

THE HONOR AND GLORY OF WHALING[1]

There are some enterprises in which a careful disorderliness is the true method.

The more I dive into this matter of whaling, and push my researches up to the very spring-head of it, so much the more am I impressed with its great honorableness and antiquity; and especially when I find so many great demi-gods and heroes, prophets of all sorts, who one way or other have shed distinction upon it, I am transported with the reflection that I myself belong, though but subordinately, to so emblazoned a fraternity.

The gallant Perseus, a son of Jupiter, was the first whaleman; and to the eternal honor of our calling be it said, that the first whale attacked by our brotherhood was not killed with any sordid intent. Those were the knightly days of our profession, when we only bore arms to succor the distressed, and not to fill men's lamp-feeders. Every one knows the fine story of Perseus and Andromeda; how the lovely Andromeda, the daughter of a king, was tied to a rock on the sea-coast, and as Leviathan was in the very act of carrying her off, Perseus, the prince of whalemen, intrepidly advancing, harpooned the monster, and delivered and married the maid. It was an admirable artistic exploit, rarely achieved by the best harpooneers of the present day; inasmuch as this Leviathan was slain at the very first dart. And let no man doubt this Arkite[2] story; for in the ancient Joppa, now Jaffa, on the Syrian coast, in one of the Pagan temples, there stood for many ages the vast skeleton of a whale, which the city's legends and all the inhabitants asserted to be the identical bones of the monster that Perseus slew. When the Romans took Joppa, the same skeleton was carried to Italy in triumph. What seems most singular and suggestively important in this story, is this: it was from Joppa that Jonah set sail.

Akin to the adventure of Perseus and Andromeda—indeed, by some supposed to be indirectly derived from it—is that famous story of St. George and the Dragon; which dragon I maintain to have been a whale; for in many old chronicles whales and dragons are strangely jumbled together, and often stand for each other. "Thou art as a lion of the waters, and as a

1. For Chs. 82 and 83, the main source is the article "Jonas" (Jonah) in Pierre Bayle, *An Historical and Critical Dictionary* (1697). Other sources are "Jonah" and "Whale" in John Kitto, ed., *Cyclopedia of Biblical Literature*, and Sir Thomas Browne, with Kitto "freshest in Melville's mind" (Mansfield and Vincent, p. 778).
2. Tribe in ancient Syria, the site of Joppa.

dragon of the sea,"[3] saith Ezekiel; hereby, plainly meaning a whale; in truth, some versions of the Bible use that word itself. Besides, it would much subtract from the glory of the exploit had St. George but encountered a crawling reptile of the land, instead of doing battle with the great monster of the deep. Any man may kill a snake, but only a Perseus, a St. George, a Coffin,[4] have the heart in them to march boldly up to a whale.

Let not the modern paintings of this scene mislead us; for though the creature encountered by that valiant whaleman of old is vaguely represented of a griffin-like shape, and though the battle is depicted on land and the saint on horseback, yet considering the great ignorance of those times, when the true form of the whale was unknown to artists; and considering that as in Perseus' case, St. George's whale might have crawled up out of the sea on the beach; and considering that the animal ridden by St. George might have been only a large seal, or sea-horse; bearing all this in mind, it will not appear altogether incompatible with the sacred legend and the ancientest draughts of the scene, to hold this so-called dragon no other than the great Leviathan himself. In fact, placed before the strict and piercing truth, this whole story will fare like that fish, flesh, and fowl idol of the Philistines, Dagon[5] by name; who being planted before the ark of Israel, his horse's head and both the palms of his hands fell off from him, and only the stump or fishy part of him remained. Thus, then, one of our own noble stamp, even a whaleman, is the tutelary guardian[6] of England; and by good rights, we harpooneers of Nantucket should be enrolled in the most noble order of St. George. And therefore, let not the knights of that honorable company[7] (none of whom, I venture to say, have ever had to do with a whale like their great patron), let them never eye a Nantucketer with disdain, since even in our woolen frocks and tarred trowsers we are much better entitled to St. George's decoration than they.

Whether to admit Hercules[8] among us or not, concerning this I long remained dubious: for though according to the Greek mythologies, that antique Crockett and Kit Carson[9]—that brawny doer of rejoicing good deeds, was swallowed down and thrown up by a whale; still, whether that strictly makes a whaleman of him, that might be mooted. It nowhere appears that he ever actually harpooned his fish, unless, indeed, from the inside. Nevertheless, he may be deemed a sort of involuntary whaleman; at any rate the whale caught him, if he did not the whale. I claim him for one of our clan.

But, by the best contradictory authorities, this Grecian story of Hercules and the whale is considered to be derived from the still more ancient Hebrew story of Jonah and the whale; and vice versâ; certainly they are very similar. If I claim the demi-god then, why not the prophet?

3. Ezekiel 32.2. In the King James Version, the Lord tells Ezekiel: "Son of man, take up a lamentation for Pharoah king of Egypt, and say unto him, Thou art like a young lion of the nations, and thou art as a whale in the seas: and thou camest forth with thy rivers, and troubledst the waters with thy feet, and fouledst their rivers."
4. A member of the Nantucket family famous for its whalemen. It seems that Melville did not know that through his Greenleaf grandmother he was a Coffin (and a Folger).
5. 1 Samuel 5.2–4.
6. St. George, here humorously claimed as a whaleman.
7. I.e., the Order of the Garter, an order of chivalry founded by Edward II in 1348, appointments made only by the sovereign.
8. Greek demigod and strongman, performer of twelve seemingly impossible labors.
9. David Crockett (1786–1836), frontiersman and politician, and Christopher Carson (1809–1868), mountain man; both already legendary folk figures, Crockett especially so after his death at the Alamo, during Melville's youth, and Carson for his role in the taking of California, just two years before Melville started *Moby-Dick* (but later known best as an Indian fighter).

Nor do heroes, saints, demigods, and prophets alone comprise the whole roll of our order. Our grand master[1] is still to be named; for like royal kings of old times, we find the head-waters of our fraternity in nothing short of the great gods themselves. That wondrous oriental story is now to be rehearsed from the Shaster,[2] which gives us the dread Vishnoo, one of the three persons in the godhead of the Hindoos; gives us this divine Vishnoo himself for our Lord;—Vishnoo, who, by the first of his ten earthly incarnations, has for ever set apart and sanctified the whale. When Brahma, or the God of Gods, saith the Shaster, resolved to recreate the world after one of its periodical dissolutions, he gave birth to Vishnoo, to preside over the work; but the Vedas, or mystical books, whose perusal would seem to have been indispensable to Vishnoo before beginning the creation, and which therefore must have contained something in the shape of practical hints to young architects, these Vedas were lying at the bottom of the waters; so Vishnoo became incarnate in a whale, and sounding down in him to the uttermost depths, rescued the sacred volumes. Was not this Vishnoo a whaleman, then? even as a man who rides a horse is called a horseman?

Perseus, St. George, Hercules, Jonah, and Vishnoo! there's a member-roll for you! What club but the whaleman's can head off like that?

CHAPTER 83

JONAH HISTORICALLY REGARDED

Reference was made to the historical story of Jonah and the whale in the preceding chapter. Now some Nantucketers rather distrust this historical story of Jonah and the whale. But then there were some sceptical Greeks and Romans, who, standing out from the orthodox pagans of their times, equally doubted the story of Hercules and the whale, and Arion[1] and the dolphin; and yet their doubting those traditions did not make those traditions one whit the less facts, for all that.

One old Sag-Harbor[2] whaleman's chief reason for questioning the Hebrew story was this:—He had one of those quaint old-fashioned Bibles, embellished with curious, unscientific plates; one of which represented Jonah's whale with two spouts in his head—a peculiarity only true with respect to a species of the Leviathan (the Right Whale, and the varieties of that order), concerning which the fishermen have this saying, "A penny roll would choke him;" his swallow is so very small. But, to this, Bishop Jebb's[3] anticipative answer is ready. It is not necessary, hints the Bishop, that we consider Jonah as tombed in the whale's belly, but as temporarily lodged in some part of his mouth. And this seems reasonable enough in the good Bishop. For truly, the Right Whale's mouth would accommodate a couple of whist-tables, and comfortably seat all the players. Possibly, too,

1. A Masonic rank.
2. The sacred writings of the Hindus, among which the oldest are the Vedas (where appears the story of Vishnu that Melville here travesties).
1. Greek poet whom it is said a dolphin rescued from drowning.
2. Long Island whaling port.
3. John Jebb (1775–1833), bishop of Limerick and author of an influential biblical commentary.

Jonah might have ensconced himself in a hollow tooth; but, on second thoughts, the Right Whale is toothless.

Another reason which Sag-Harbor (he went by that name) urged for his want of faith in this matter of the prophet, was something obscurely in reference to his incarcerated body and the whale's gastric juices. But this objection likewise falls to the ground, because a German exegetist supposes that Jonah must have taken refuge in the floating body of a *dead* whale—even as the French soldiers in the Russian campaign[4] turned their dead horses into tents, and crawled into them. Besides, it has been divined by other continental commentators, that when Jonah was thrown overboard from the Joppa ship, he straightway effected his escape to another vessel near by, some vessel with a whale for a figure-head; and, I would add, possibly called "The Whale," as some craft are nowadays christened the "Shark," the "Gull," the "Eagle." Nor have there been wanting learned exegetists who have opined that the whale mentioned in the book of Jonah merely meant a life-preserver—an inflated bag of wind—which the endangered prophet swam to, and so was saved from a watery doom. Poor Sag-Harbor, therefore, seems worsted all round. But he had still another reason for his want of faith. It was this, if I remember right: Jonah was swallowed by the whale in the Mediterranean Sea, and after three days he was vomited up somewhere within three days' journey of Nineveh, a city on the Tigris, very much more than three days' journey across from the nearest point of the Mediterranean coast. How is that?

But was there no other way for the whale to land the prophet within that short distance of Nineveh? Yes. He might have carried him round by the way of the Cape of Good Hope. But not to speak of the passage through the whole length of the Mediterranean, and another passage up the Persian Gulf and Red Sea, such a supposition would involve the complete circumnavigation of all Africa in three days, not to speak of the Tigris waters, near the site of Nineveh, being too shallow for any whale to swim in. Besides, this idea of Jonah's weathering the Cape of Good Hope at so early a day would wrest the honor of the discovery of that great headland from Bartholomew Diaz,[5] its reputed discoverer, and so make modern history a liar.

But all these foolish arguments of old Sag-Harbor only evinced his foolish pride of reason—a thing still more reprehensible in him, seeing that he had but little learning except what he had picked up from the sun and the sea. I say it only shows his foolish, impious pride, and abominable, devilish rebellion against the reverend clergy. For by a Portuguese Catholic priest, this very idea of Jonah's going to Nineveh viâ the Cape of Good Hope was advanced as a signal magnification of the general miracle. And so it was. Besides, to this day, the highly enlightened Turks devoutly believe in the historical story of Jonah. And some three centuries ago, an English traveller in old Harris's Voyages,[6] speaks of a Turkish Mosque built in honor of Jonah, in which mosque was a miraculous lamp that burnt without any oil.

4. Napoleon's catastrophic invasion of Russia, 1812.
5. Portuguese navigator and explorer (1450?–1500), the first European on record to round the Cape of Good Hope (1486).
6. Melville took this report not from Harris but from Bayle's *Dictionary*, Vincent shows (1949, p. 285).

CHAPTER 84

PITCHPOLING

To make them run easily and swiftly, the axles of carriages are anointed; and for much the same purpose, some whalers perform an analogous operation upon their boat; they grease the bottom. Nor is it to be doubted that as such a procedure can do no harm, it may possibly be of no contemptible advantage; considering that oil and water are hostile; that oil is a sliding thing, and that the object in view is to make the boat slide bravely. Queequeg believed strongly in anointing his boat, and one morning not long after the German ship Jungfrau disappeared, took more than customary pains in that occupation; crawling under its bottom, where it hung over the side, and rubbing in the unctuousness as though diligently seeking to insure a crop of hair from the craft's bald keel. He seemed to be working in obedience to some particular presentiment. Nor did it remain unwarranted by the event.

Towards noon whales were raised; but so soon as the ship sailed down to them, they turned and fled with swift precipitancy; a disordered flight, as of Cleopatra's barges from Actium.[1]

Nevertheless, the boats pursued, and Stubb's was foremost. By great exertion, Tashtego at last succeeded in planting one iron; but the stricken whale, without at all sounding, still continued his horizontal flight, with added fleetness. Such unintermitted strainings upon the planted iron must sooner or later inevitably extract it. It became imperative to lance the flying whale, or be content to lose him. But to haul the boat up to his flank was impossible, he swam so fast and furious. What then remained?

Of all the wondrous devices and dexterities, the sleights of hand and countless subtleties, to which the veteran whaleman is so often forced, none exceed that fine manoeuvre with the lance called pitchpoling. Small sword, or broad sword, in all its exercises boasts nothing like it. It is only indispensable with an inveterate running whale; its grand fact and feature is the wonderful distance to which the long lance is accurately darted from a violently rocking, jerking boat, under extreme headway. Steel and wood included, the entire spear is some ten or twelve feet in length; the staff is much slighter than that of the harpoon, and also of a lighter material—pine. It is furnished with a small rope called a warp, of considerable length, by which it can be hauled back to the hand after darting.

But before going further, it is important to mention here, that though the harpoon may be pitchpoled in the same way with the lance, yet it is seldom done; and when done, is still less frequently successful, on account of the greater weight and inferior length of the harpoon as compared with the lance, which in effect become serious drawbacks. As a general thing, therefore, you must first get fast to a whale, before any pitchpoling comes into play.

Look now at Stubb; a man who from his humorous, deliberate coolness and equanimity in the direst emergencies, was specially qualified to excel

1. In the naval battle here (31 B.C.E.), the combined fleets of Cleopatra and Mark Antony were defeated by Octavius Caesar. As in the allusion to Antony in Ch. 54, Melville's main source is Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra*.

in pitchpoling. Look at him; he stands upright in the tossed bow of the flying boat; wrapt in fleecy foam, the towing whale is forty feet ahead. Handling the long lance lightly, glancing twice or thrice along its length to see if it be exactly straight, Stubb whistlingly gathers up the coil of the warp in one hand, so as to secure its free end in his grasp, leaving the rest unobstructed. Then holding the lance full before his waistband's middle, he levels it at the whale; when, covering him with it, he steadily depresses the butt-end in his hand, thereby elevating the point till the weapon stands fairly balanced upon his palm, fifteen feet in the air. He minds you somewhat of a juggler, balancing a long staff on his chin. Next moment with a rapid, nameless impulse, in a superb lofty arch the bright steel spans the foaming distance, and quivers in the life spot of the whale. Instead of sparkling water, he now spouts red blood.

"That drove the spigot out of him!" cries Stubb. "'Tis July's immortal Fourth; all fountains must run wine to-day! Would now, it were old Orleans whiskey, or old Ohio, or unspeakable old Monongahela! Then, Tashtego, lad, I'd have ye hold a canakin to the jet, and we'd drink round it! Yea, verily, hearts alive, we'd brew choice punch in the spread of his spout-hole there, and from that live punch-bowl quaff the living stuff!"

Again and again to such gamesome talk, the dexterous dart is repeated, the spear returning to its master like a greyhound held in skilful leash. The agonized whale goes into his flurry; the towline is slackened, and the pitchpoler dropping astern, folds his hands, and mutely watches the monster die.

CHAPTER 85

THE FOUNTAIN

That for six thousand years—and no one knows how many millions of ages before—the great whales should have been spouting all over the sea, and sprinkling and mistifying the gardens of the deep, as with so many sprinkling or mistifying pots; and that for some centuries back, thousands of hunters should have been close by the fountain of the whale, watching these sprinklings and spoutings—that all this should be, and yet, that down to this blessed minute (fifteen and a quarter minutes past one o'clock P.M. of this sixteenth day of December, A.D. 1850),[1] it should still remain a problem, whether these spoutings are, after all, really water, or nothing but vapor—this is surely a noteworthy thing.

Let us, then, look at this matter, along with some interesting items contingent. Every one knows that by the peculiar cunning of their gills, the finny tribes in general breathe the air which at all times is combined with the element in which they swim; hence, a herring or a cod might live a century, and never once raise its head above the surface. But owing to his marked internal structure which gives him regular lungs, like a human being's, the whale can only live by inhaling the disengaged air in the open atmosphere. Wherefore the necessity for his periodical visits to the upper world. But he cannot in any degree breathe through his mouth, for, in his ordinary attitude, the Sperm Whale's mouth is buried at least eight feet

1. The first American edition had 1851, the year of publication, an error Melville or someone else corrected in *The Whale*.

beneath the surface; and what is still more, his windpipe has no connexion with his mouth. No, he breathes through his spiracle alone; and this is on the top of his head.

If I say, that in any creature breathing is only a function indispensable to vitality, inasmuch as it withdraws from the air a certain element, which being subsequently brought into contact with the blood imparts to the blood its vivifying principle, I do not think I shall err; though I may possibly use some superfluous scientific words. Assume it, and it follows that if all the blood in a man could be aerated with one breath, he might then seal up his nostrils and not fetch another for a considerable time. That is to say, he would then live without breathing. Anomalous as it may seem, this is precisely the case with the whale, who systematically lives, by intervals, his full hour and more (when at the bottom) without drawing a single breath, or so much as in any way inhaling a particle of air; for, remember, he has no gills. How is this? Between his ribs and on each side of his spine he is supplied with a remarkable involved Cretan labyrinth of vermicelli-like vessels, which vessels, when he quits the surface, are completely distended with oxygenated blood. So that for an hour or more, a thousand fathoms in the sea, he carries a surplus stock of vitality in him, just as the camel crossing the waterless desert carries a surplus supply of drink for future use in its four supplementary stomachs. The anatomical fact of this labyrinth is indisputable; and that the supposition founded upon it is reasonable and true, seems the more cogent to me, when I consider the otherwise inexplicable obstinacy of that leviathan in *having his spoutings out*, as the fishermen phrase it. This is what I mean. If unmolested, upon rising to the surface, the Sperm Whale will continue there for a period of time exactly uniform with all his other unmolested risings. Say he stays eleven minutes, and jets seventy times, that is, respires seventy breaths; then whenever he rises again, he will be sure to have his seventy breaths over again, to a minute. Now, if after he fetches a few breaths you alarm him, so that he sounds, he will be always dodging up again to make good his regular allowance of air. And not till those seventy breaths are told, will he finally go down to stay out his full term below. Remark, however, that in different individuals these rates are different; but in any one they are alike. Now, why should the whale thus insist upon having his spoutings out, unless it be to replenish his reservoir of air, ere descending for good? How obvious is it, too, that this necessity for the whale's rising exposes him to all the fatal hazards of the chase. For not by hook or by net could this vast leviathan be caught, when sailing a thousand fathoms beneath the sunlight. Not so much thy skill, then, O hunter, as the great necessities, that strike the victory to thee!

In man, breathing is incessantly going on—one breath only serving for two or three pulsations; so that whatever other business he has to attend to, waking or sleeping, breathe he must, or die he will. But the Sperm Whale only breathes about one seventh or Sunday of his time.

It has been said that the whale only breathes through his spout-hole; if it could truthfully be added that his spouts are mixed with water, then I opine we should be furnished with the reason why his sense of smell seems obliterated in him; for the only thing about him that at all answers to his nose is that identical spout-hole; and being so clogged with two elements, it could not be expected to have the power of smelling. But owing to the mystery of the spout—whether it be water or whether it be vapor—no absolute certainty can as yet be arrived at on this head. Sure it is, nevertheless,

that the Sperm Whale has no proper olfactories. But what does he want of them? No roses, no violets, no Cologne-water in the sea.

Furthermore, as his windpipe solely opens into the tube of his spouting canal, and as that long canal—like the grand Erie Canal—is furnished with a sort of locks (that open and shut) for the downward retention of air or the upward exclusion of water, therefore the whale has no voice;[2] unless you insult him by saying, that when he so strangely rumbles, he talks through his nose. But then again, what has the whale to say? Seldom have I known any profound being that had anything to say to this world, unless forced to stammer out something by way of getting a living. Oh! happy that the world is such an excellent listener!

Now, the spouting canal of the Sperm Whale, chiefly intended as it is for the conveyance of air, and for several feet laid along, horizontally, just beneath the upper surface of his head, and a little to one side; this curious canal is very much like a gas-pipe laid down in a city on one side of a street. But the question returns whether this gas-pipe is also a water-pipe; in other words, whether the spout of the Sperm Whale is the mere vapor of the exhaled breath, or whether that exhaled breath is mixed with water taken in at the mouth, and discharged through the spiracle. It is certain that the mouth indirectly communicates with the spouting canal; but it cannot be proved that this is for the purpose of discharging water through the spiracle. Because the greatest necessity for so doing would seem to be, when in feeding he accidentally takes in water. But the Sperm Whale's food is far beneath the surface, and there he cannot spout even if he would. Besides, if you regard him very closely, and time him with your watch, you will find that when unmolested, there is an undeviating rhyme between the periods of his jets and the ordinary periods of respiration.

But why pester one with all this reasoning on the subject? Speak out! You have seen him spout; then declare what the spout is; can you not tell water from air? My dear sir, in this world it is not so easy to settle these plain things. I have ever found your plain things the knottiest of all. And as for this whale spout, you might almost stand in it, and yet be undecided as to what it is precisely.

The central body of it is hidden in the snowy sparkling mist enveloping it; and how can you certainly tell whether any water falls from it, when, always, when you are close enough to a whale to get a close view of his spout, he is in a prodigious commotion, the water cascading all around him. And if at such times you should think that you really perceived drops of moisture in the spout, how do you know that they are not merely condensed from its vapor; or how do you know that they are not those identical drops superficially lodged in the spout-hole fissure, which is countersunk into the summit of the whale's head? For even when tranquilly swimming through the mid-day sea in a calm, with his elevated hump sun-dried as a dromedary's in the desert; even then, the whale always carries a small basin of water on his head, as under a blazing sun you will sometimes see a cavity in a rock filled up with rain.

Nor is it at all prudent for the hunter to be over curious touching the precise nature of the whale spout. It will not do for him to be peering into it, and putting his face in it. You cannot go with your pitcher to this

2. A supposition since disproved. Whales "sing," according to the great modern whale authority Roger Payne in *Among Whales* (1995).

fountain and fill it, and bring it away. For even when coming into slight contact with the outer, vapory shreds of the jet, which will often happen, your skin will feverishly smart, from the acridness of the thing so touching it. And I know one, who coming into still closer contact with the spout, whether with some scientific object in view, or otherwise, I cannot say, the skin peeled off from his cheek and arm. Wherefore, among whalemen, the spout is deemed poisonous; they try to evade it. Another thing; I have heard it said, and I do not much doubt it, that if the jet is fairly spouted into your eyes, it will blind you. The wisest thing the investigator can do then, it seems to me, is to let this deadly spout alone.

Still, we can hypothesize, even if we cannot prove and establish. My hypothesis is this: that the spout is nothing but mist. And besides other reasons, to this conclusion I am impelled, by considerations touching the great inherent dignity and sublimity of the Sperm Whale; I account him no common, shallow being, inasmuch as it is an undisputed fact that he is never found on soundings, or near shores; all other whales sometimes are. He is both ponderous and profound. And I am convinced that from the heads of all ponderous profound beings, such as Plato, Pyrrho, the Devil, Jupiter, Dante, and so on, there always goes up a certain semi-visible steam, while in the act of thinking deep thoughts. While composing a little treatise on Eternity, I had the curiosity to place a mirror before me; and ere long saw reflected there, a curious involved worming and undulation in the atmosphere over my head. The invariable moisture of my hair, while plunged in deep thought, after six cups of hot tea in my thin shingled attic, of an August noon; this seems an additional argument for the above supposition.

And how nobly it raises our conceit of the mighty, misty monster, to behold him solemnly sailing through a calm tropical sea; his vast, mild head overhung by a canopy of vapor, engendered by his incommunicable contemplations, and that vapor—as you will sometimes see it—glorified by a rainbow, as if Heaven itself had put its seal upon his thoughts. For, d'ye see, rainbows do not visit the clear air; they only irradiate vapor. And so, through all the thick mists of the dim doubts in my mind, divine intuitions now and then shoot, enkindling my fog with a heavenly ray. And for this I thank God; for all have doubts; many deny; but doubts or denials, few along with them, have intuitions. Doubts of all things earthly, and intuitions of some things heavenly; this combination makes neither believer nor infidel, but makes a man who regards them both with equal eye.

CHAPTER 86

THE TAIL

Other poets have warbled the praises of the soft eye of the antelope, and the lovely plumage of the bird that never alights; less celestial, I celebrate a tail.

Reckoning the largest sized Sperm Whale's tail to begin at that point of the trunk where it tapers to about the girth of a man, it comprises upon its upper surface alone, an area of at least fifty square feet. The compact round body of its root expands into two broad, firm, flat palms or flukes, gradually shoaling away to less than an inch in thickness. At the crotch or junction, these flukes slightly overlap, then sideways recede from each

other like wings, leaving a wide vacancy between. In no living thing are the lines of beauty more exquisitely defined than in the crescentic borders of these flukes. At its utmost expansion in the full grown whale, the tail will considerably exceed twenty feet across.

The entire member seems a dense webbed bed of welded sinews; but cut into it, and you find that three distinct strata compose it:—upper, middle, and lower. The fibres in the upper and lower layers, are long and horizontal; those of the middle one, very short, and running crosswise between the outside layers. This triune structure, as much as anything else, imparts power to the tail. To the student of old Roman walls, the middle layer will furnish a curious parallel to the thin course of tiles always alternating with the stone in those wonderful relics of the antique, and which undoubtedly contribute so much to the great strength of the masonry.

But as if this vast local power in the tendinous tail were not enough, the whole bulk of the leviathan is knit over with a warp and woof of muscular fibres and filaments, which passing on either side the loins and running down into the flukes, insensibly blend with them, and largely contribute to their might; so that in the tail the confluent measureless force of the whole whale seems concentrated to a point. Could annihilation occur to matter, this were the thing to do it.

Nor does this—its amazing strength, at all tend to cripple the graceful flexion of its motions; where infantileness of ease undulates through a Titanism of power. On the contrary, those motions derive their most appalling beauty from it. Real strength never impairs beauty or harmony, but it often bestows it; and in everything imposingly beautiful, strength has much to do with the magic. Take away the tied tendons that all over seem bursting from the marble in the carved Hercules,[1] and its charm would be gone. As devout Eckerman[2] lifted the linen sheet from the naked corpse of Goethe, he was overwhelmed with the massive chest of the man, that seemed as a Roman triumphal arch. When Angelo[3] paints even God the Father in human form, mark what robustness is there. And whatever they may reveal of the divine love in the Son, the soft, curled, hermaphroditical Italian pictures, in which his idea has been most successfully embodied; these pictures, so destitute as they are of all brawniness, hint nothing of any power, but the mere negative, feminine one of submission and endurance, which on all hands it is conceded, form the peculiar practical virtues of his teachings.

Such is the subtle elasticity of the organ I treat of, that whether wielded in sport, or in earnest, or in anger, whatever be the mood it be in, its flexions are invariably marked by exceeding grace. Therein no fairy's arm can transcend it.

Five great motions are peculiar to it. First, when used as a fin for progression; Second, when used as a mace in battle; Third, in sweeping; Fourth, in lobtailing; Fifth, in peaking flukes.

First: Being horizontal in its position, the Leviathan's tail acts in a different manner from the tails of all other sea creatures. It never wriggles.

1. In the famous Farnese Hercules statue excavated from Pompeii, the hero is naked, powerfully muscled, but leaning casually on his great club.
2. Johann Peter Eckerman (1792–1854), literary assistant to Goethe, reports this incident in his *Conversations with Goethe* (1839).
3. Michaelangelo, on the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel.

In man or fish, wriggling is a sign of inferiority. To the whale, his tail is the sole means of propulsion. Scroll-wise coiled forwards beneath the body, and then rapidly sprung backwards, it is this which gives that singular darting, leaping motion to the monster when furiously swimming. His side-fins only serve to steer by.

Second: It is a little significant, that while one sperm whale only fights another sperm whale with his head and jaw, nevertheless, in his conflicts with man, he chiefly and contemptuously uses his tail. In striking at a boat, he swiftly curves away his flukes from it, and the blow is only inflicted by the recoil. If it be made in the unobstructed air, especially if it descend to its mark, the stroke is then simply irresistible. No ribs of man or boat can withstand it. Your only salvation lies in eluding it; but if it comes sideways through the opposing water, then partly owing to the light buoyancy of the whaleboat, and the elasticity of its materials, a cracked rib or a dashed plank or two, a sort of stitch in the side, is generally the most serious result. These submerged side blows are so often received in the fishery, that they are accounted mere child's play. Some one strips off a frock, and the hole is stopped.

Third: I cannot demonstrate it, but it seems to me, that in the whale the sense of touch is concentrated in the tail; for in this respect there is a delicacy in it only equalled by the daintiness of the elephant's trunk. This delicacy is chiefly evinced in the action of sweeping, when in maidenly gentleness the whale with a certain soft slowness moves his immense flukes from side to side upon the surface of the sea; and if he feel but a sailor's whisker, woe to that sailor, whiskers and all. What tenderness there is in that preliminary touch! Had this tail any prehensile power, I should straightway bethink me of Darmonodes'[4] elephant that so frequented the flower-market, and with low salutations presented nosegays to damsels, and then caressed their zones.[5] On more accounts than one, a pity it is that the whale does not possess this prehensile virtue in his tail; for I have heard of yet another elephant, that when wounded in the fight, curved round his trunk and extracted the dart.

Fourth: Stealing unawares upon the whale in the fancied security of the middle of solitary seas, you find him unbent from the vast corpulence of his dignity, and kitten-like, he plays on the ocean as if it were a hearth. But still you see his power in his play. The broad palms of his tail are flirted high into the air; then smiting the surface, the thunderous concussion resounds for miles. You would almost think a great gun had been discharged; and if you noticed the light wreath of vapor from the spiracle at his other extremity, you would think that that was the smoke from the touch-hole.

Fifth: As in the ordinary floating posture of the leviathan the flukes lie considerably below the level of his back, they are then completely out of sight beneath the surface; but when he is about to plunge into the deeps, his entire flukes with at least thirty feet of his body are tossed erect in the air, and so remain vibrating a moment, till they downwards shoot out of view. Excepting the sublime *breach*—somewhere else to be described—this peaking of the whale's flukes is perhaps the grandest sight to be seen

4. Unidentified, but several sources report such behavior from an elephant.
5. The waists of the "damsels."

in all animated nature. Out of the bottomless profundities the gigantic tail seems spasmodically snatching at the highest heaven. So in dreams, have I seen majestic Satan thrusting forth his tormented colossal claw from the flame Baltic of Hell. But in gazing at such scenes, it is all in all what mood you are in; if in the Dantean,[6] the devils will occur to you; if in that of Isaiah,[7] the archangels. Standing at the mast-head of my ship during a sunrise that crimsoned sky and sea, I once saw a large herd of whales in the east, all heading towards the sun, and for a moment vibrating in concert with peaked flukes. As it seemed to me at the time, such a grand embodiment of adoration of the gods was never beheld, even in Persia, the home of the fire worshippers. As Ptolemy Philopater[8] testified of the African elephant, I then testified of the whale, pronouncing him the most devout of all beings. For according to King Juba, the military elephants of antiquity often hailed the morning with their trunks uplifted in the profoundest silence.

The chance comparison in this chapter, between the whale and the elephant, so far as some aspects of the tail of the one and the trunk of the other are concerned, should not tend to place those two opposite organs on an equality, much less the creatures to which they respectively belong. For as the mightiest elephant is but a terrier to Leviathan, so, compared with Leviathan's tail, his trunk is but the stalk of a lily. The most direful blow from the elephant's trunk were as the playful tap of a fan, compared with the measureless crush and crash of the sperm whale's ponderous flukes, which in repeated instances have one after the other hurled entire boats with all their oars and crews into the air, very much as an Indian juggler tosses his balls.[9]

The more I consider this mighty tail, the more do I deplore my inability to express it. At times there are gestures in it, which, though they would well grace the hand of man, remain wholly inexplicable. In an extensive herd, so remarkable, occasionally, are these mystic gestures, that I have heard hunters who have declared them akin to Free-Mason signs and symbols; that the whale, indeed, by these methods intelligently conversed with the world. Nor are there wanting other motions of the whale in his general body, full of strangeness, and unaccountable to his most experienced assailant. Dissect him how I may, then, I but go skin deep; I know him not, and never will. But if I know not even the tail of this whale, how understand his head? much more, how comprehend his face, when face he has none? Thou shalt see my back parts,[1] my tail, he seems to say, but my face shall not be seen. But I cannot completely make out his back parts; and hint what he will about his face, I say again he has no face.

6. In the mood of Dante's *Inferno*.
7. Isaiah in a vision sees six-winged seraphim, each with one pair of wings covering his face, another pair covering his feet, and a third pair used for flying. As they fly (with faces covered) they cry to each other, "Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of Hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory" (Isaiah 6.2–3).
8. Melville's source for this and for King Juba's report is Plutarch's *Morals*; his copy is unlocated, but it was a printing of Philemon Holland's 1603 translation.
9. Though all comparison in the way of general bulk between the whale and the elephant is preposterous, inasmuch as in that particular the elephant stands in much the same respect to the whale that a dog does to the elephant; nevertheless, there are not wanting some points of curious similitude; among these is the spout. It is well known that the elephant will often draw up water or dust in his trunk, and then elevating it, jet it forth in a stream. [Melville's note.]
1. Jeremiah 18.17: "I will scatter them as with an east wind before the enemy; I will shew them the back, and not the face, in the day of their calamity."

CHAPTER 87

THE GRAND ARMADA

The long and narrow peninsula of Malacca, extending south-eastward from the territories of Birmah, forms the most southerly point of all Asia. In a continuous line from that peninsula stretch the long islands of Sumatra, Java, Bally, and Timor; which, with many others, form a vast mole, or rampart, lengthwise connecting Asia with Australia, and dividing the long unbroken Indian ocean from the thickly studded oriental archipelagoes. This rampart is pierced by several sally-ports for the convenience of ships and whales; conspicuous among which are the straits of Sunda and Malacca. By the straits of Sunda, chiefly, vessels bound to China from the west, emerge into the China seas.

Those narrow straits of Sunda divide Sumatra from Java; and standing midway in that vast rampart of islands, buttressed by that bold green promontory, known to seamen as Java Head; they not a little correspond to the central gateway opening into some vast walled empire: and considering the inexhaustible wealth of spices, and silks, and jewels, and gold, and ivory, with which the thousand islands of that oriental sea are enriched, it seems a significant provision of nature, that such treasures, by the very formation of the land, should at least bear the appearance, however ineffectual, of being guarded from the all-grasping western world. The shores of the Straits of Sunda are unsupplied with those domineering fortresses which guard the entrances to the Mediterranean, the Baltic, and the Propontis. Unlike the Danes, these Orientals do not demand the obsequious homage of lowered top-sails from the endless procession of ships before the wind, which for centuries past, by night and by day, have passed between the islands of Sumatra and Java, freighted with the costliest cargoes of the east. But while they freely waive a ceremonial like this, they do by no means renounce their claim to more solid tribute.

Time out of mind the piratical proas[1] of the Malays, lurking among the low shaded coves and islets of Sumatra, have sallied out upon the vessels sailing through the straits, fiercely demanding tribute at the point of their spears. Though by the repeated bloody chastisements they have received at the hands of European cruisers, the audacity of these corsairs has of late been somewhat repressed; yet, even at the present day, we occasionally hear of English and American vessels, which, in those waters, have been remorselessly boarded and pillaged.

With a fair, fresh wind, the Pequod was now drawing nigh to these straits; Ahab purposing to pass through them into the Javan sea, and thence, cruising northwards, over waters known to be frequented here and there by the Sperm Whale, sweep inshore by the Philippine Islands, and gain the far coast of Japan, in time for the great whaling season there. By these means, the circumnavigating Pequod would sweep almost all the known Sperm Whale cruising grounds of the world, previous to descending upon the Line in the Pacific; where Ahab, though everywhere else foiled in his pursuit, firmly counted upon giving battle to Moby Dick, in

1. Large Malay war boat.

the sea he was most known to frequent; and at a season when he might most reasonably be presumed to be haunting it.

But how now? in this zoned quest, does Ahab touch no land? does his crew drink air? Surely, he will stop for water. Nay. For a long time, now, the circus-running sun has raced within his fiery ring, and needs no sustenance but what's in himself. So Ahab. Mark this, too, in the whaler. While other hulls are loaded down with alien stuff, to be transferred to foreign wharves; the world-wandering whale-ship carries no cargo but herself and crew, their weapons and their wants. She has a whole lake's contents bottled in her ample hold. She is ballasted with utilities; not altogether with unusable pig-lead and kentledge.[2] She carries years' water in her. Clear old prime Nantucket water; which, when three years afloat, the Nantucketer, in the Pacific, prefers to drink before the brackish fluid, but yesterday rafted off in casks, from the Peruvian or Indian streams. Hence it is, that, while other ships may have gone to China from New York, and back again, touching at a score of ports, the whale-ship, in all that interval, may not have sighted one grain of soil; her crew having seen no man but floating seamen like themselves. So that did you carry them the news that another flood had come; they would only answer—"Well, boys, here's the ark!"

Now, as many Sperm Whales had been captured off the western coast of Java, in the near vicinity of the Straits of Sunda; indeed, as most of the ground, roundabout, was generally recognised by the fishermen as an excellent spot for cruising; therefore, as the Pequod gained more and more upon Java Head, the lookouts were repeatedly hailed, and admonished to keep wide awake. But though the green palmy cliffs of the land soon loomed on the starboard bow, and with delighted nostrils the fresh cinnamon was snuffed in the air, yet not a single jet was descried. Almost renouncing all thought of falling in with any game hereabouts, the ship had well nigh entered the straits, when the customary cheering cry was heard from aloft, and ere long a spectacle of singular magnificence saluted us.

But here be it premised, that owing to the unwearied activity with which of late they have been hunted over all four oceans, the Sperm Whales, instead of almost invariably sailing in small detached companies, as in former times, are now frequently met with in extensive herds, sometimes embracing so great a multitude, that it would almost seem as if numerous nations of them had sworn solemn league and covenant for mutual assistance and protection. To this aggregation of the Sperm Whale into such immense caravans, may be imputed the circumstance that even in the best cruising grounds, you may now sometimes sail for weeks and months together, without being greeted by a single spout; and then be suddenly saluted by what sometimes seems thousands on thousands.

Broad on both bows, at the distance of some two or three miles, and forming a great semicircle, embracing one half of the level horizon, a continuous chain of whale-jets were up-playing and sparkling in the noon-day air. Unlike the straight perpendicular twin-jets of the Right Whale, which, dividing at top, fall over in two branches, like the cleft drooping boughs of a willow, the single forward-slanting spout of the Sperm Whale presents a thick curled bush of white mist, continually rising and falling away to leeward.

2. Pieces of iron laid over the keelson plates for ballast.

Seen from the Pequod's deck, then, as she would rise on a high hill of the sea, this host of vapory spouts, individually curling up into the air, and beheld through a blending atmosphere of bluish haze, showed like the thousand cheerful chimneys of some dense metropolis, descried of a balmy autumnal morning, by some horseman on a height.

As marching armies approaching an unfriendly defile in the mountains, accelerate their march, all eagerness to place that perilous passage in their rear, and once more expand in comparative security upon the plain; even so did this vast fleet of whales now seem hurrying forward through the straits; gradually contracting the wings of their semicircle, and swimming on, in one solid, but still crescentic centre.

Crowding all sail the Pequod pressed after them; the harpooneers handling their weapons, and loudly cheering from the heads of their yet suspended boats. If the wind only held, little doubt had they, that chased through these Straits of Sunda, the vast host would only deploy into the Oriental seas to witness the capture of not a few of their number. And who could tell whether, in that congregated caravan, Moby Dick himself might not temporarily be swimming, like the worshipped white-elephant in the coronation procession of the Siamese! So with stun-sail piled on stun-sail, we sailed along, driving these leviathans before us; when, of a sudden, the voice of Tashtego was heard, loudly directing attention to something in our wake.

Corresponding to the crescent in our van, we beheld another in our rear. It seemed formed of detached white vapors, rising and falling something like the spouts of the whales; only they did not so completely come and go; for they constantly hovered, without finally disappearing. Levelling his glass at this sight, Ahab quickly revolved in his pivot-hole, crying, "Aloft there, and rig whips and buckets to wet the sails;—Malays, sir, and after us!"

As if too long lurking behind the headlands, till the Pequod should fairly have entered the straits, these rascally Asiatics were now in hot pursuit, to make up for their over-cautious delay. But when the swift Pequod, with a fresh leading wind, was herself in hot chase; how very kind of these tawny philanthropists to assist in speeding her on to her own chosen pursuit,—mere riding-whips and rowels to her, that they were. As with glass under arm, Ahab to-and-fro paced the deck; in his forward turn beholding the monsters he chased, and in the after one the bloodthirsty pirates chasing *him*; some such fancy as the above seemed his. And when he glanced upon the green walls of the watery defile in which the ship was then sailing, and bethought him that through that gate lay the route to his vengeance, and beheld, how that through that same gate he was now both chasing and being chased to his deadly end; and not only that, but a herd of remorseless wild pirates and inhuman atheistical devils were infernally cheering him on with their curses;—when all these conceits had passed through his brain, Ahab's brow was left gaunt and ribbed, like the black sand beach after some stormy tide has been gnawing it, without being able to drag the firm thing from its place.

But thoughts like these troubled very few of the reckless crew; and when, after steadily dropping and dropping the pirates astern, the Pequod at last shot by the vivid green Cockatoo Point on the Sumatra side, emerging at last upon the broad waters beyond; then, the harpooneers seemed more

to grieve that the swift whales had been gaining upon the ship, than to rejoice that the ship had so victoriously gained upon the Malays. But still driving on in the wake of the whales, at length they seemed abating their speed; gradually the ship neared them; and the wind now dying away, word was passed to spring to the boats. But no sooner did the herd, by some presumed wonderful instinct of the Sperm Whale, become notified of the three keels that were after them,—though as yet a mile in their rear,—than they rallied again, and forming in close ranks and battalions, so that their spouts all looked like flashing lines of stacked bayonets, moved on with redoubled velocity.

Stripped to our shirts and drawers, we sprang to the white-ash, and after several hours' pulling were almost disposed to renounce the chase, when a general pausing commotion among the whales gave animating token that they were now at last under the influence of that strange perplexity of inert irresolution, which, when the fishermen perceive it in the whale, they say he is *gallied*.[3] The compact martial columns in which they had been hitherto rapidly and steadily swimming, were now broken up in one measureless rout; and like King Porus'[4] elephants in the Indian battle with Alexander, they seemed going mad with consternation. In all directions expanding in vast irregular circles, and aimlessly swimming hither and thither, by their short thick spoutings, they plainly betrayed their distraction of panic. This was still more strangely evinced by those of their number, who, completely paralysed as it were, helplessly floated like water-logged dismantled ships on the sea. Had these leviathans been but a flock of simple sheep, pursued over the pasture by three fierce wolves, they could not possibly have evinced such excessive dismay. But this occasional timidity is characteristic of almost all herding creatures. Though banding together in tens of thousands, the lion-maned buffaloes of the West have fled before a solitary horseman. Witness, too, all human beings, how when herded together in the sheep-fold of a theatre's pit, they will, at the slightest alarm of fire, rush helter-skelter for the outlets, crowding, trampling, jamming, and remorselessly dashing each other to death. Best, therefore, withhold any amazement at the strangely gallied whales before us, for there is no folly of the beasts of the earth which is not infinitely outdone by the madness of men.

Though many of the whales, as has been said, were in violent motion, yet it is to be observed that as a whole the herd neither advanced nor retreated, but collectively remained in one place. As is customary in those cases, the boats at once separated, each making for some one lone whale on the outskirts of the shoal. In about three minutes' time, Queequeg's

3. To *gally*, or *gallow*, is to frighten excessively,—to confound with fright. It is an old Saxon word. It occurs once in Shakspere:—

> "The wrathful skies
> *Gallow* the very wanderers of the dark,
> And make them keep their caves."
> *Lear*, Act III. sc. ii.

To common land usages, the word is now completely obsolete. When the polite landsman first hears it from the gaunt Nantucketer, he is apt to set it down as one of the whaleman's self-derived savageries. Much the same is it with many other sinewy Saxonisms of this sort, which emigrated to the New-England rocks with the noble brawn of the old English emigrants in the time of the Commonwealth. Thus, some of the best and furthest-descended English words—the etymological Howards and Percys—are now democratised, nay, plebeianised—so to speak—in the New World. [Melville's note, not in the first American edition; he wrote it on the American proofs from which the English edition was set.]

4. Indian prince defeated at the river Hydaspes by Alexander the Great in 327 B.C.E.

harpoon was flung; the stricken fish darted blinding spray in our faces, and then running away with us like light, steered straight for the heart of the herd. Though such a movement on the part of the whale struck under such circumstances, is in no wise unprecedented; and indeed is almost always more or less anticipated; yet does it present one of the more perilous vicissitudes of the fishery. For as the swift monster drags you deeper and deeper into the frantic shoal, you bid adieu to circumspect life and only exist in a delirious throb.

As, blind and deaf, the whale plunged forward, as if by sheer power of speed to rid himself of the iron leech that had fastened to him; as we thus tore a white gash in the sea, on all sides menaced as we flew, by the crazed creatures to and fro rushing about us; our beset boat was like a ship mobbed by ice-isles in a tempest, and striving to steer through their complicated channels and straits, knowing not at what moment it may be locked in and crushed.

But not a bit daunted, Queequeg steered us manfully; now sheering off from this monster directly across our route in advance; now edging away from that, whose colossal flukes were suspended overhead, while all the time, Starbuck stood up in the bows, lance in hand, pricking out of our way whatever whales he could reach by short darts, for there was no time to make long ones. Nor were the oarsmen quite idle, though their wonted duty was now altogether dispensed with. They chiefly attended to the shouting part of the business. "Out of the way, Commodore!" cried one, to a great dromedary that of a sudden rose bodily to the surface, and for an instant threatened to swamp us. "Hard down with your tail, there!" cried a second to another, which, close to our gunwale, seemed calmly cooling himself with his own fan-like extremity.

All whaleboats carry certain curious contrivances, originally invented by the Nantucket Indians, called druggs. Two thick squares of wood of equal size are stoutly clenched together, so that they cross each other's grain at right angles; a line of considerable length is then attached to the middle of this block, and the other end of the line being looped, it can in a moment be fastened to a harpoon. It is chiefly among gallied whales that this drugg is used. For then, more whales are close round you than you can possibly chase at one time. But sperm whales are not every day encountered; while you may, then, you must kill all you can. And if you cannot kill them all at once, you must wing them, so that they can be afterwards killed at your leisure. Hence it is, that at times like these the drugg comes into requisition. Our boat was furnished with three of them. The first and second were successfully darted, and we saw the whales staggeringly running off, fettered by the enormous sidelong resistance of the towing drugg. They were cramped like malefactors with the chain and ball. But upon flinging the third, in the act of tossing overboard the clumsy wooden block, it caught under one of the seats of the boat, and in an instant tore it out and carried it away, dropping the oarsman in the boat's bottom as the seat slid from under him. On both sides the sea came in at the wounded planks, but we stuffed two or three drawers and shirts in,[5] and so stopped the leaks for the time.

5. They had been stripped to their shirts and drawers for several hours, so both garments were ready at hand.

It had been next to impossible to dart these drugged-harpoons, were it not that as we advanced into the herd, our whale's way greatly diminished; moreover, that as we went still further and further from the circumference of commotion, the direful disorders seemed waning. So that when at last the jerking harpoon drew out, and the towing whale sideways vanished; then, with the tapering force of his parting momentum, we glided between two whales into the innermost heart of the shoal, as if from some mountain torrent we had slid into a serene valley lake. Here the storms in the roaring glens between the outermost whales, were heard but not felt. In this central expanse the sea presented that smooth satin-like surface, called a sleek, produced by the subtle moisture thrown off by the whale in his more quiet moods. Yes, we were now in that enchanted calm which they say lurks at the heart of every commotion. And still in the distracted distance we beheld the tumults of the outer concentric circles, and saw successive pods of whales, eight or ten in each, swiftly going round and round, like multiplied spans of horses in a ring; and so closely shoulder to shoulder, that a Titanic circus-rider might easily have overarched the middle ones, and so have gone round on their backs. Owing to the density of the crowd of reposing whales, more immediately surrounding the embayed axis of the herd, no possible chance of escape was at present afforded us. We must watch for a breach in the living wall that hemmed us in; the wall that had only admitted us in order to shut us up. Keeping at the centre of the lake, we were occasionally visited by small tame cows and calves; the women and children of this routed host.

Now, inclusive of the occasional wide intervals between the revolving outer circles, and inclusive of the spaces between the various pods in any one of those circles, the entire area at this juncture, embraced by the whole multitude, must have contained at least two or three square miles. At any rate—though indeed such a test at such a time might be deceptive—spoutings might be discovered from our low boat that seemed playing up almost from the rim of the horizon. I mention this circumstance, because, as if the cows and calves had been purposely locked up in this innermost fold; and as if the wide extent of the herd had hitherto prevented them from learning the precise cause of its stopping; or, possibly, being so young, unsophisticated, and every way innocent and inexperienced; however it may have been, these smaller whales—now and then visiting our becalmed boat from the margin of the lake—evinced a wondrous fearlessness and confidence, or else a still, becharmed panic which it was impossible not to marvel at. Like household dogs they came snuffling round us, right up to our gunwales, and touching them; till it almost seemed that some spell had suddenly domesticated them. Queequeg patted their foreheads; Starbuck scratched their backs with his lance; but fearful of the consequences, for the time refrained from darting it.

But far beneath this wondrous world upon the surface, another and still stranger world met our eyes as we gazed over the side. For, suspended in those watery vaults, floated the forms of the nursing mothers of the whales, and those that by their enormous girth seemed shortly to become mothers. The lake, as I have hinted, was to a considerable depth exceedingly transparent; and as human infants while suckling will calmly and fixedly gaze away from the breast, as if leading two different lives at the time; and while yet drawing mortal nourishment, be still spiritually feasting upon some

unearthly reminiscence;—even so did the young of these whales seem looking up towards us, but not at us, as if we were but a bit of Gulf-weed in their new-born sight. Floating on their sides, the mothers also seemed quietly eyeing us. One of these little infants, that from certain queer tokens seemed hardly a day old, might have measured some fourteen feet in length, and some six feet in girth. He was a little frisky; though as yet his body seemed scarce yet recovered from that irksome position it had so lately occupied in the maternal reticule; where, tail to head, and all ready for the final spring, the unborn whale lies bent like a Tartar's bow. The delicate side-fins, and the palms of his flukes, still freshly retained the plaited crumpled appearance of a baby's ears newly arrived from foreign parts.

"Line! line!" cried Queequeg, looking over the gunwale; "him fast! him fast!—Who line him! Who struck?—Two whale; one big, one little!"

"What ails ye, man?" cried Starbuck.

"Look-e here," said Queequeg pointing down.

As when the stricken whale, that from the tub has reeled out hundreds of fathoms of rope; as, after deep sounding, he floats up again, and shows the slackened curling line buoyantly rising and spiralling towards the air; so now, Starbuck saw long coils of the umbilical cord of Madame Leviathan, by which the young cub seemed still tethered to its dam. Not seldom in the rapid vicissitudes of the chase, this natural line, with the maternal end loose, becomes entangled with the hempen one, so that the cub is thereby trapped. Some of the subtlest secrets of the seas seemed divulged to us in this enchanted pond. We saw young Leviathan amours in the deep.[6]

And thus, though surrounded by circle upon circle of consternations and affrights, did these inscrutable creatures at the centre freely and fearlessly indulge in all peaceful concernments; yea, serenely revelled in dalliance and delight. But even so, amid the tornadoed Atlantic of my being, do I myself still for ever centrally disport in mute calm; and while ponderous planets of unwaning woe revolve round me, deep down and deep inland there I still bathe me in eternal mildness of joy.

Meanwhile, as we thus lay entranced, the occasional sudden frantic spectacles in the distance evinced the activity of the other boats, still engaged in drugging the whales on the frontier of the host; or possibly carrying on the war within the first circle, where abundance of room and some convenient retreats were afforded them. But the sight of the enraged drugged whales now and then blindly darting to and fro across the circles, was nothing to what at last met our eyes. It is sometimes the custom when fast to a whale more than commonly powerful and alert, to seek to hamstring him, as it were, by sundering or maiming his gigantic tail-tendon. It is done by darting a short-handled cutting-spade, to which is attached a rope for hauling it back again. A whale wounded (as we afterwards learned) in this part, but not effectually, as it seemed, had broken

6. The sperm whale, as with all other species of the Leviathan, but unlike most other fish, breeds indifferently at all seasons; after a gestation which may probably be set down at nine months, producing but one at a time; though in some few known instances giving birth to an Esau and Jacob:—a contingency provided for in suckling by two teats, curiously situated, one on each side of the anus; but the breasts themselves extend upwards from that. When by chance these precious parts in a nursing whale are cut by the hunter's lance, the mother's pouring milk and blood rivallingly discolor the sea for rods. The milk is very sweet and rich; it has been tasted by men; it might do well with strawberries. When overflowing with mutual esteem, the whales salute *more hominum*. [Melville's note.] "Esau and Jacob": see Genesis 25:29–34. "*More hominum*": the way people do.

away from the boat, carrying along with him half of the harpoon line; and in the extraordinary agony of the wound, he was now dashing among the revolving circles like the lone mounted desperado Arnold,[7] at the battle of Saratoga, carrying dismay wherever he went.

But agonizing as was the wound of this whale, and an appalling spectacle enough, any way; yet the peculiar horror with which he seemed to inspire the rest of the herd, was owing to a cause which at first the intervening distance obscured from us. But at length we perceived that by one of the unimaginable accidents of the fishery, this whale had become entangled in the harpoon-line that he towed; he had also run away with the cutting-spade in him; and while the free end of the rope attached to that weapon, had permanently caught in the coils of the harpoon-line round his tail, the cutting-spade itself had worked loose from his flesh. So that tormented to madness, he was now churning through the water, violently flailing with his flexible tail, and tossing the keen spade about him, wounding and murdering his own comrades.

This terrific object seemed to recall the whole herd from their stationary fright. First, the whales forming the margin of our lake began to crowd a little, and tumble against each other, as if lifted by half spent billows from afar; then the lake itself began faintly to heave and swell; the submarine bridal-chambers and nurseries vanished; in more and more contracting orbits the whales in the more central circles began to swim in thickening clusters. Yes, the long calm was departing. A low advancing hum was soon heard; and then like to the tumultuous masses of block-ice when the great river Hudson breaks up in Spring, the entire host of whales came tumbling upon their inner centre, as if to pile themselves up in one common mountain. Instantly Starbuck and Queequeg changed places; Starbuck taking the stern.

"Oars! Oars!" he intensely whispered, seizing the helm—"gripe your oars, and clutch your souls, now! My God, men, stand by! Shove him off, you Queequeg—the whale there!—prick him!—hit him! Stand up—stand up, and stay so! Spring, men—pull, men; never mind their backs—scrape them!—scrape away!"

The boat was now all but jammed between two vast black bulks, leaving a narrow Dardanelles[8] between their long lengths. But by desperate endeavor we at last shot into a temporary opening; then giving way rapidly, and at the same time earnestly watching for another outlet. After many similar hair-breadth escapes, we at last swiftly glided into what had just been one of the outer circles, but now crossed by random whales, all violently making for one centre. This lucky salvation was cheaply purchased by the loss of Queequeg's hat, who, while standing in the bows to prick the fugitive whales, had his hat taken clean from his head by the air-eddy made by the sudden tossing of a pair of broad flukes close by.

Riotous and disordered as the universal commotion now was, it soon resolved itself into what seemed a systematic movement; for having clumped

7. Benedict Arnold (later a traitor) was a victorious American general at the battle of Saratoga, north of Albany, October 7, 1777. In the battle another officer was Melville's grandfather, Peter Gansevoort, who had earlier in the same campaign repulsed the British at Fort Stanwix. This was recent family history; and a quarter century later, in 1877, one of Melville's sisters was kept busy loaning letters and artifacts to historical societies celebrating the centennial of these battles.

8. The narrow strait between Greece (in Europe) and Turkey (in Asia).

together at last in one dense body, they then renewed their onward flight with augmented fleetness. Further pursuit was useless; but the boats still lingered in their wake to pick up what drugged whales might be dropped astern, and like wise to secure one which Flask had killed and waifed. The waif is a pennoned pole, two or three of which are carried by every boat; and which, when additional game is at hand, are inserted upright into the floating body of a dead whale, both to mark its place on the sea, and also as token of prior possession, should the boats of any other ship draw near.

The result of this lowering was somewhat illustrative of that sagacious saying in the Fishery,—the more whales the less fish. Of all the drugged whales only one was captured. The rest contrived to escape for the time, but only to be taken, as will hereafter be seen, by some other craft than the Pequod.

CHAPTER 88

SCHOOLS AND SCHOOLMASTERS

The previous chapter gave account of an immense body or herd of Sperm Whales, and there was also then given the probable cause inducing those vast aggregations.

Now, though such great bodies are at times encountered, yet, as must have been seen, even at the present day, small detached bands are occasionally observed, embracing from twenty to fifty individuals each. Such bands are known as schools. They generally are of two sorts; those composed almost entirely of females, and those mustering none but young vigorous males, or bulls, as they are familiarly designated.

In cavalier attendance upon the school of females, you invariably see a male of full grown magnitude, but not old; who, upon any alarm, evinces his gallantry by falling in the rear and covering the flight of his ladies. In truth, this gentleman is a luxurious Ottoman,[1] swimming about over the watery world, surroundingly accompanied by all the solaces and endearments of the harem. The contrast between this Ottoman and his concubines is striking; because, while he is always of the largest leviathanic proportions, the ladies, even at full growth, are not more than one third of the bulk of an average-sized male. They are comparatively delicate, indeed; I dare say, not to exceed half a dozen yards round the waist. Nevertheless, it cannot be denied that upon the whole they are hereditarily entitled to *en bon point*.[2]

It is very curious to watch this harem and its lord in their indolent ramblings. Like fashionables, they are for ever on the move in leisurely search of variety. You meet them on the Line in time for the full flower of the Equatorial feeding season, having just returned, perhaps, from spending the summer in the Northern seas, and so cheating summer of all unpleasant weariness and warmth. By the time they have lounged up and down the promenade of the Equator awhile, they start for the Oriental waters in anticipation of the cool season there, and so evade the other excessive temperature of the year.

1. A Turk, seen as a powerful sensualist and keeper of a harem of women, in the light of Romantic poems and tales of Melville's youth.
2. Stoutness or fatness (French).

When serenely advancing on one of these journeys, if any strange suspicious sights are seen, my lord whale keeps a wary eye on his interesting family. Should any unwarrantably pert young Leviathan coming that way, presume to draw confidentially close to one of the ladies, with what prodigious fury the Bashaw assails him, and chases him away! High times, indeed, if unprincipled young rakes like him are to be permitted to invade the sanctity of domestic bliss; though do what the Bashaw will, he cannot keep the most notorious Lothario[3] out of his bed; for, alas! all fish bed in common. As ashore, the ladies often cause the most terrible duels among their rival admirers; just so with the whales, who sometimes come to deadly battle, and all for love. They fence with their long lower jaws, sometimes locking them together, and so striving for the supremacy like elks that warringly interweave their antlers. Not a few are captured having the deep scars of these encounters,—furrowed heads, broken teeth, scolloped fins; and in some instances, wrenched and dislocated mouths.

But supposing the invader of domestic bliss to betake himself away at the first rush of the harem's lord, then is it very diverting to watch that lord. Gently he insinuates his vast bulk among them again and revels there awhile, still in tantalizing vicinity to young Lothario, like pious Solomon devoutly worshipping among his thousand concubines.[4] Granting other whales to be in sight, the fishermen will seldom give chase to one of these Grand Turks; for these Grand Turks are too lavish of their strength, and hence their unctuousness is small. As for the sons and the daughters they beget, why, those sons and daughters must take care of themselves; at least, with only the maternal help. For like certain other omnivorous roving lovers that might be named, my Lord Whale has no taste for the nursery, however much for the bower; and so, being a great traveller, he leaves his anonymous babies all over the world; every baby an exotic. In good time, nevertheless, as the ardor of youth declines; as years and dumps increase; as reflection lends her solemn pauses; in short, as a general lassitude overtakes the sated Turk; then a love of ease and virtue supplants the love for maidens; our Ottoman enters upon the impotent, repentant, admonitory stage of life, forswears, disbands the harem, and grown to an exemplary, sulky old soul, goes about all alone among the meridians and parallels saying his prayers, and warning each young Leviathan from his amorous errors.

Now, as the harem of whales is called by the fishermen a school, so is the lord and master of that school technically known as the schoolmaster. It is therefore not in strict character, however admirably satirical, that after going to school himself, he should then go abroad inculcating not what he learned there, but the folly of it. His title, schoolmaster, would very naturally seem derived from the name bestowed upon the harem itself, but some have surmised that the man who first thus entitled this sort of Ottoman whale, must have read the memoirs of Vidocq,[5] and informed himself what sort of a country-schoolmaster that famous Frenchman was in his younger days, and what was the nature of those occult lessons he inculcated into some of his pupils.

3. Seducer.
4. 1 Kings 11.3 specifies that Solomon had "seven hundred wives, princesses, and three hundred concubines: and his wives turned away his heart" (away from God).
5. In his *Memoires de Vidocq* (1828), the Parisian detective Eugène Françoise Vidocq (1775–1857) tells of seducing his young female students.

The same secludedness and isolation to which the schoolmaster whale betakes himself in his advancing years, is true of all aged Sperm Whales. Almost universally, a lone whale—as a solitary Leviathan is called—proves an ancient one. Like venerable moss-bearded Daniel Boone,[6] he will have no one near him but Nature herself; and her he takes to wife in the wilderness of waters, and the best of wives she is, though she keeps so many moody secrets.

The schools composing none but young and vigorous males, previously mentioned, offer a strong contrast to the harem schools. For while those female whales are characteristically timid, the young males, or forty-barrel-bulls, as they call them, are by far the most pugnacious of all Leviathans, and proverbially the most dangerous to encounter; excepting those wondrous grey-headed, grizzled whales, sometimes met, and these will fight you like grim fiends exasperated by a penal gout.

The Forty-barrel-bull schools are larger than the harem schools. Like a mob of young collegians, they are full of fight, fun, and wickedness, tumbling round the world at such a reckless, rollicking rate, that no prudent underwriter would insure them any more than he would a riotous lad at Yale or Harvard. They soon relinquish this turbulence though, and when about three fourths grown, break up, and separately go about in quest of settlements, that is, harems.

Another point of difference between the male and female schools is still more characteristic of the sexes. Say you strike a Forty-barrel-bull—poor devil! all his comrades quit him. But strike a member of the harem school, and her companions swim around her with every token of concern, sometimes lingering so near her and so long, as themselves to fall a prey.

CHAPTER 89

FAST-FISH AND LOOSE-FISH

The allusion to the waifs and waif-poles in the last chapter but one, necessitates some account of the laws and regulations of the whale fishery, of which the waif may be deemed the grand symbol and badge.

It frequently happens that when several ships are cruising in company, a whale may be struck by one vessel, then escape, and be finally killed and captured by another vessel; and herein are indirectly comprised many minor contingencies, all partaking of this one grand feature. For example,—after a weary and perilous chase and capture of a whale, the body may get loose from the ship by reason of a violent storm; and drifting far away to leeward, be retaken by a second whaler, who, in a calm, snugly tows it alongside, without risk of life or line. Thus the most vexatious and violent disputes would often arise between the fishermen, were there not some written or unwritten, universal, undisputed law applicable to all cases.

Perhaps the only formal whaling code authorized by legislative enactment, was that of Holland. It was decreed by the States-General in A.D. 1695. But though no other nation has ever had any written whaling law,

6. American frontiersman (1734–1820), remembered for moving westward, time and again, to be out of sight of smoke from a neighbor's chimney.

yet the American fishermen have been their own legislators and lawyers in this matter. They have provided a system which for terse comprehensiveness surpasses Justinian's Pandects and the By-laws of the Chinese Society for the Suppression of Meddling with other People's Business.[1] Yes; these laws might be engraven on a Queen Anne's farthing,[2] or the barb of a harpoon, and worn round the neck, so small are they.

I. A Fast-Fish belongs to the party fast to it.

II. A Loose-Fish is fair game for anybody who can soonest catch it.

But what plays the mischief with this masterly code is the admirable brevity of it, which necessitates a vast volume of commentaries to expound it.

First: What is a Fast-Fish? Alive or dead a fish is technically fast, when it is connected with an occupied ship or boat, by any medium at all controllable by the occupant or occupants,—a mast, an oar, a nine-inch cable, a telegraph wire, or a strand of cobweb, it is all the same. Likewise a fish is technically fast when it bears a waif, or any other recognised symbol of possession; so long as the party waifing it plainly evince their ability at any time to take it alongside, as well as their intention so to do.

These are scientific commentaries; but the commentaries of the whalemen themselves sometimes consist in hard words and harder knocks—the Coke-upon-Littleton[3] of the fist. True, among the more upright and honorable whalemen allowances are always made for peculiar cases, where it would be an outrageous moral injustice for one party to claim possession of a whale previously chased or killed by another party. But others are by no means so scrupulous.

Some fifty years ago there was a curious case of whale-trover litigated in England, wherein the plaintiffs set forth that after a hard chase of a whale in the northern seas, they (the plaintiffs) had succeeded in harpooning the fish; but at last, through peril of their lives, were obliged to forsake, not only their lines, but their boat itself,—Furthermore: ultimately the defendants (the crew of another ship) came up with the whale; struck, killed, seized, and finally appropriated it before the very eyes of the plaintiffs;—Yet again:—and when those defendants were remonstrated with, their captain snapped his fingers in the plaintiffs' teeth, and assured them that by way of doxology to the deed he had done, he would now retain their line, harpoons, and boat, all of which had remained attached to the whale at the time of the seizure. Wherefore, the plaintiffs now sued for the recovery of the value of their whale, line, harpoons, and boat.

Mr. Erskine was counsel for the defendants; Lord Ellenborough was the judge. In the course of the defence, the witty Erskine went on to illustrate his position, by alluding to a recent crim. con. case,[4] wherein a gentleman, after in vain trying to bridle his wife's viciousness, had at last abandoned her upon the seas of life; but in the course of years, repenting of that step, he instituted an action to recover possession of her. He then proceeded to say that, though the gentleman had originally harpooned the lady, and had

1. Another of Melville's inventions. "Justinian's Pandects": the code of law propounded by Justinian, Byzantine emperor from 527 to 565.
2. Some commemorative farthings, though not Queen Anne's, were much smaller than an American dime.
3. Standard legal text, Sir Edward Coke's 17th-century commentary on a 15th-century work on real, or fixed, property, such as land and building, by Sir Thomas Littleton.
4. A case of criminal conversation, or adultery ("conversation": sexual intercourse).

once had her fast, and only by reason of the great stress of her plunging viciousness, had at last abandoned her; yet abandon her he did, so that she became a loose-fish; and therefore when a subsequent gentleman re-harpooned her, the lady then became that subsequent gentleman's property, along with whatever harpoon might have been found sticking in her.

Now in the present case Erskine contended that the examples of the whale and the lady were reciprocally illustrative of each other.

These pleadings, and the counter pleadings, being duly heard, the very learned judge in set terms decided, to wit:—That as for the boat, he awarded it to the plaintiffs, because they had merely abandoned it to save their lives; but that with regard to the controverted whale, harpoons, and line, they belonged to the defendants; the whale, because it was a Loose-Fish at the time of the final capture; and the harpoons and line because when the fish made off with them, it (the fish) acquired a property in those articles; and hence anybody who afterwards took the fish had a right to them. Now, the defendants afterwards took the fish; ergo, the aforesaid articles were theirs.

A common man looking at this decision of the very learned Judge, might possibly object to it. But ploughed up to the primary rock of the matter, the two great principles laid down in the twin whaling laws previously quoted, and applied and elucidated by Lord Ellenborough in the above cited case; these two laws touching Fast-Fish and Loose-Fish, I say, will, on reflection, be found the fundamentals of all human jurisprudence; for notwithstanding its complicated tracery of sculpture, the Temple of the Law, like the Temple of the Philistines,[5] has but two props to stand on.

Is it not a saying in every one's mouth, Possession is half of the law: that is, regardless of how the thing came into possession? But often possession is the whole of the law. What are the sinews and souls of Russian serfs and Republican slaves[6] but Fast-Fish, whereof possession is the whole of the law? What to the rapacious landlord is the widow's last mite[7] but a Fast-Fish? What is yonder undetected villain's marble mansion with a door-plate for a waif; what is that but a Fast-Fish? What is the ruinous discount which Mordecai, the broker, gets from poor Woebegone, the bankrupt, on a loan to keep Woebegone's family from starvation; what is that ruinous discount but a Fast-Fish? What is the Archbishop of Savesoul's income of £100,000 seized from the scant bread and cheese of hundreds of thousands of broken-backed laborers (all sure of heaven without any of Savesoul's help) what is that globular 100,000 but a Fast-Fish? What are the Duke of Dunder's hereditary towns and hamlets but Fast-Fish? What to that redoubted harpooneer, John Bull, is poor Ireland, but a Fast-Fish? What to that apostolic lancer, Brother Jonathan, is Texas but a Fast-Fish? And concerning all these, is not Possession the whole of the law?

But if the doctrine of Fast-Fish be pretty generally applicable, the kindred doctrine of Loose-Fish is still more widely so. That is internationally and universally applicable.

What was America in 1492 but a Loose-Fish, in which Columbus struck the Spanish standard by way of waifing it for his royal master and mistress?

5. The temple brought down by Samson after he was blinded (Judges 16.29–30).
6. Slaves in a republic, like the United States (an ironic oxymoron).
7. A better gift than the gifts cast into the treasury at the temple by the rich. Jesus said: "For all they did cast in of their abundance; but she of her want did cast in all that she had, even all her living" (Mark 12:44).

What was Poland to the Czar? What Greece to the Turk? What India to England? What at last will Mexico be to the United States? All Loose-Fish.

What are the Rights of Man and the Liberties of the World but Loose-Fish? What all men's minds and opinions but Loose-Fish? What is the principle of religious belief in them but a Loose-Fish? What to the ostentatious smuggling verbalists are the thoughts of thinkers but Loose-Fish? What is the great globe itself but a Loose-Fish? And what are you, reader, but a Loose-Fish and a Fast-Fish, too?

CHAPTER 90

HEADS OR TAILS

"De balena vero sufficit, si rex habeat caput, et regina caudam."[1]
Bracton, l. 3, *c.* 3.[2]

Latin from the books of the Laws of England, which taken along with the context, means, that of all whales captured by anybody on the coast of that land, the King, as Honorary Grand Harpooneer, must have the head, and the Queen be respectfully presented with the tail. A division which, in the whale, is much like halving an apple; there is no intermediate remainder. Now as this law, under a modified form, is to this day in force in England; and as it offers in various respects a strange anomaly touching the general law of Fast and Loose-Fish, it is here treated of in a separate chapter, on the same courteous principle that prompts the English railways to be at the expense of a separate car, specially reserved for the accommodation of royalty. In the first place, in curious proof of the fact that the above-mentioned law is still in force, I proceed to lay before you a circumstance that happened within the last two years.

It seems that some honest mariners of Dover, or Sandwich, or some one of the Cinque Ports, had after a hard chase succeeded in killing and beaching a fine whale which they had originally descried afar off from the shore. Now the Cinque Ports are partially or somehow under the jurisdiction of a sort of policeman or beadle, called a Lord Warden. Holding the office directly from the crown, I believe, all the royal emoluments incident to the Cinque Port territories become by assignment his. By some writers this office is called a sinecure. But not so. Because the Lord Warden is busily employed at times in fobbing[3] his perquisites; which are his chiefly by virtue of that same fobbing of them.

Now when these poor sun-burnt mariners, bare-footed, and with their trowsers rolled high up on their eely legs, had wearily hauled their fat fish high and dry, promising themselves a good £150 from the precious oil and bone; and in fantasy sipping rare tea with their wives, and good ale with their cronies, upon the strength of their respective shares; up steps a very learned and most Christian and charitable gentleman, with a copy of Blackstone[4] under his arm; and laying it upon the whale's head, he says—"Hands

1. Concerning the whale, truly it suffices, if the king have the head, and the queen the tail (Latin).
2. The English judge Henry of Bratton, in the 1220s and 1230s, revised and partly wrote the medieval legal treatise *On the Laws and Customs of England*, the greatest such survey until Sir William Blackstone's *Commentaries on the Laws of England*, in the late 1760s.
3. Pocketing.
4. *Commentaries*, famous legal compendium by Sir William Blackstone (1723–1780).

off! this fish, my masters, is a Fast-Fish. I seize it as the Lord Warden's." Upon this the poor mariners in their respectful consternation—so truly English—knowing not what to say, fall to vigorously scratching their heads all round; meanwhile ruefully glancing from the whale to the stranger. But that did in nowise mend the matter, or at all soften the hard heart of the learned gentleman with the copy of Blackstone. At length one of them, after long scratching about for his ideas, made bold to speak.

"Please, sir, who is the Lord Warden?"

"The Duke."

"But the duke had nothing to do with taking this fish?"

"It is his."

"We have been at great trouble, and peril, and some expense, and is all that to go to the Duke's benefit; we getting nothing at all for our pains but our blisters?"

"It is his."

"Is the Duke so very poor as to be forced to this desperate mode of getting a livelihood?"

"It is his."

"I thought to relieve my old bed-ridden mother by part of my share of this whale."

"It is his."

"Won't the Duke be content with a quarter or a half?"

"It is his."

In a word, the whale was seized and sold, and his Grace the Duke of Wellington[5] received the money. Thinking that viewed in some particular lights, the case might by a bare possibility in some small degree be deemed, under the circumstances, a rather hard one, an honest clergyman of the town respectfully addressed a note to his Grace, begging him to take the case of those unfortunate mariners into full consideration. To which my Lord Duke in substance replied (both letters were published) that he had already done so, and received the money, and would be obliged to the reverend gentleman if for the future he (the reverend gentleman) would decline meddling with other people's business. Is this the still militant old man, standing at the corners of the three kingdoms, on all hands coercing alms of beggars?

It will readily be seen that in this case the alleged right of the Duke to the whale was a delegated one from the Sovereign. We must needs inquire then on what principle the Sovereign is originally invested with that right. The law itself has already been set forth. But Plowden[6] gives us the reason for it. Says Plowden, the whale so caught belongs to the King and Queen, "because of its superior excellence." And by the soundest commentators this has ever been held a cogent argument in such matters.

But why should the King have the head, and the Queen the tail? A reason for that, ye lawyers!

In his treatise on "Queen-Gold," or Queen-pinmoney, an old King's Bench author, one William Prynne,[7] thus discourseth: "Ye tail is ye Queen's, that ye Queen's wardrobe may be supplied with ye whalebone."[8] Now this

5. Arthur Wellesley (1769–1852), English victor over Napoleon at Waterloo (1815), prime minister (1828–30) in Melville's boyhood.
6. Edmund Plowden (1518–1585), English jurist.
7. English Puritan pamphleteer, (1600–1669).
8. This "ye" is to be pronounced "the." Printers who did not have a type for the obsolete letter "thorn," representing this "th" sound, substituted the y, which looks much like the thorn.

was written at a time when the black limber bone of the Greenland or Right whale was largely used in ladies' bodices. But this same bone is not in the tail; it is in the head, which is a sad mistake for a sagacious lawyer like Prynne. But is the Queen a mermaid, to be presented with a tail? An allegorical meaning may lurk here.

There are two royal fish so styled by the English law writers—the whale and the sturgeon; both royal property under certain limitations, and nominally supplying the tenth branch of the crown's ordinary revenue. I know not that any other author has hinted of the matter; but by inference it seems to me that the sturgeon must be divided in the same way as the whale, the King receiving the highly dense and elastic head peculiar to that fish, which, symbolically regarded, may possibly be humorously grounded upon some presumed congeniality. And thus there seems a reason in all things, even in law.

CHAPTER 91

THE PEQUOD MEETS THE ROSE-BUD

> "In vain it was to rake for Ambergriese in the paunch of this Leviathan, insufferable fetor denying that inquiry."
>
> *Sir T. Browne, V. E.*[1]

It was a week or two after the last whaling scene recounted, and when we were slowly sailing over a sleepy, vapory, mid-day sea, that the many noses on the Pequod's deck proved more vigilant discoverers than the three pairs of eyes aloft. A peculiar and not very pleasant smell was smelt in the sea.

"I will bet something now," said Stubb, "that somewhere hereabouts are some of those drugged whales we tickled the other day. I thought they would keel up before long."

Presently, the vapors in advance slid aside; and there in the distance lay a ship, whose furled sails betokened that some sort of whale must be alongside. As we glided nearer, the stranger showed French colors from his peak; and by the eddying cloud of vulture sea-fowl that circled, and hovered, and swooped around him, it was plain that the whale alongside must be what the fishermen call a blasted whale, that is, a whale that has died unmolested on the sea, and so floated an unappropriated corpse. It may well be conceived, what an unsavory odor such a mass must exhale; worse than an Assyrian city in the plague, when the living are incompetent to bury the departed. So intolerable indeed is it regarded by some, that no cupidity could persuade them to moor alongside of it. Yet are there those who will still do it; notwithstanding the fact that the oil obtained from such subjects is of a very inferior quality, and by no means of the nature of attar-of-rose.

Coming still nearer with the expiring breeze, we saw that the Frenchman had a second whale alongside; and this second whale seemed even more of a nosegay than the first. In truth, it turned out to be one of those problematical whales that seem to dry up and die with a sort of prodigious dyspepsia, or indigestion; leaving their defunct bodies almost entirely bankrupt of anything like oil. Nevertheless, in the proper place we shall

1. Sir Thomas Browne's *Vulgar Errors* or *Pseudodoxi Epidemica* (1646).

see that no knowing fisherman will ever turn up his nose at such a whale as this, however much he may shun blasted whales in general.

The Pequod had now swept so nigh to the stranger, that Stubb vowed he recognised his cutting spade-pole entangled in the lines that were knotted round the tail of one of these whales.

"There's a pretty fellow, now," he banteringly laughed, standing in the ship's bows, "there's a jackal for ye! I well know that these Crappoes[2] of Frenchmen are but poor devils in the fishery; sometimes lowering their boats for breakers, mistaking them for Sperm Whale spouts; yes, and sometimes sailing from their port with their hold full of boxes of tallow candles, and cases of snuffers, foreseeing that all the oil they will get won't be enough to dip the Captain's wick into; aye, we all know these things; but look ye, here's a Crappo that is content with our leavings, the drugged whale there, I mean; aye, and is content too with scraping the dry bones of that other precious fish he has there. Poor devil! I say, pass round a hat, some one, and let's make him a present of a little oil for dear charity's sake. For what oil he'll get from that drugged whale there, wouldn't be fit to burn in a jail; no, not in a condemned cell. And as for the other whale, why, I'll agree to get more oil by chopping up and trying out these three masts of ours, than he'll get from that bundle of bones; though, now that I think of it, it may contain something worth a good deal more than oil; yes, ambergris. I wonder now if our old man has thought of that. It's worth trying. Yes, I'm in for it;" and so saying he started for the quarter-deck.

By this time the faint air had become a complete calm; so that whether or no, the Pequod was now fairly entrapped in the smell, with no hope of escaping except by its breezing up again. Issuing from the cabin, Stubb now called his boat's crew, and pulled off for the stranger. Drawing across her bow, he perceived that in accordance with the fanciful French taste, the upper part of her stem-piece was carved in the likeness of a huge drooping stalk, was painted green, and for thorns had copper spikes projecting from it here and there; the whole terminating in a symmetrical folded bulb of a bright red color. Upon her head boards, in large gilt letters, he read "Bouton de Rose,"—Rose-button, or Rose-bud; and this was the romantic name of this aromatic ship.

Though Stubb did not understand the *Bouton* part of the inscription, yet the word *rose*, and the bulbous figure-head put together, sufficiently explained the whole to him.

"A wooden rose-bud, eh?" he cried with his hand to his nose, "that will do very well; but how like all creation it smells!"

Now in order to hold direct communication with the people on deck, he had to pull round the bows to the starboard side, and thus come close to the blasted whale; and so talk over it.

Arrived then at this spot, with one hand still to his nose, he bawled—"Bouton-de-Rose, ahoy! are there any of you Bouton-de-Roses that speak English?"

"Yes," rejoined a Guernsey-man[3] from the bulwarks, who turned out to be the chief-mate.

2. Frogs, derogative for Frenchmen, from *crapauds*, "toads."
3. From the island of Guernsey, in the English Channel.

"Well, then, my Bouton-de-Rose-bud, have you seen the White Whale?"

"*What* whale?"

"The *White* Whale—a Sperm Whale—Moby Dick, have ye seen him?"

"Never heard of such a whale. Cachalot Blanche! White Whale—no."

"Very good, then; good bye now, and I'll call again in a minute."

Then rapidly pulling back towards the Pequod, and seeing Ahab leaning over the quarter-deck rail awaiting his report, he moulded his two hands into a trumpet and shouted—"No, Sir! No!" Upon which Ahab retired, and Stubb returned to the Frenchman.

He now perceived that the Guernsey-man, who had just got into the chains, and was using a cutting-spade, had slung his nose in a sort of bag.

"What's the matter with your nose, there?" said Stubb. "Broke it?"

"I wish it was broken, or that I didn't have any nose at all!" answered the Guernsey-man, who did not seem to relish the job he was at very much. "But what are you holding *yours* for?"

"Oh, nothing! It's a wax nose; I have to hold it on. Fine day, aint it? Air rather gardenny,[4] I should say; throw us a bunch of posies, will ye, Bouton-de-Rose?"

"What in the devil's name do you want here?" roared the Guernsey-man, flying into a sudden passion.

"Oh! keep cool—cool? yes, that's the word; why don't you pack those whales in ice while you're working at 'em? But joking aside, though; do you know, Rose-bud, that it's all nonsense trying to get any oil out of such whales? As for that dried up one, there, he hasn't a gill in his whole carcase."

"I know that well enough; but, d'ye see, the Captain here won't believe it; this is his first voyage; he was a Cologne manufacturer before. But come aboard, and mayhap he'll believe you, if he won't me; and so I'll get out of this dirty scrape."

"Anything to oblige ye, my sweet and pleasant fellow," rejoined Stubb, and with that he soon mounted to the deck. There a queer scene presented itself. The sailors, in tasselled caps of red worsted, were getting the heavy tackles in readiness for the whales. But they worked rather slow and talked very fast, and seemed in anything but a good humor. All their noses upwardly projected from their faces like so many jib-booms. Now and then pairs of them would drop their work, and run up to the masthead to get some fresh air. Some thinking they would catch the plague, dipped oakum in coal-tar, and at intervals held it to their nostrils. Others having broken the stems of their pipes almost short off at the bowl, were vigorously puffing tobacco-smoke, so that it constantly filled their olfactories.

Stubb was struck by a shower of outcries and anathemas proceeding from the Captain's round-house[5] abaft; and looking in that direction saw a fiery face thrust from behind the door, which was held ajar from within. This was the tormented surgeon, who, after in vain remonstrating against the proceedings of the day, had betaken himself to the Captain's round-house (*cabinet* he called it) to avoid the pest; but still, could not help yelling out his entreaties and indignations at times.

Marking all this, Stubb augured well for his scheme, and turning to the Guernsey-man had a little chat with him, during which the stranger mate

4. I.e., stinking, like a freshly manured garden.
5. The Captain's personal privy, perched on the rail. The surgeon prefers the odor of the "cabinet" to that of the blasted whale.

expressed his detestation of his Captain as a conceited ignoramus, who had brought them all into so unsavory and unprofitable a pickle. Sounding him carefully, Stubb further perceived that the Guernsey-man had not the slightest suspicion concerning the ambergris. He therefore held his peace on that head, but otherwise was quite frank and confidential with him, so that the two quickly concocted a little plan for both circumventing and satirizing the Captain, without his at all dreaming of distrusting their sincerity. According to this little plan of theirs, the Guernsey-man, under cover of an interpreter's office, was to tell the Captain what he pleased, but as coming from Stubb; and as for Stubb, he was to utter any nonsense that should come uppermost in him during the interview.

By this time their destined victim appeared from his cabin. He was a small and dark, but rather delicate looking man for a sea-captain, with large whiskers and moustache, however; and wore a red cotton velvet vest with watch-seals at his side. To this gentleman, Stubb was now politely introduced by the Guernsey-man, who at once ostentatiously put on the aspect of interpreting between them.

"What shall I say to him first?" said he.

"Why," said Stubb, eyeing the velvet vest and the watch and seals, "you may as well begin by telling him that he looks a sort of babyish to me, though I don't pretend to be a judge."

"He says, Monsieur," said the Guernsey-man, in French, turning to his captain, "that only yesterday his ship spoke a vessel, whose captain and chief-mate, with six sailors, had all died of a fever caught from a blasted whale they had brought alongside."

Upon this the captain started, and eagerly desired to know more.

"What now?" said the Guernsey-man to Stubb.

"Why, since he takes it so easy, tell him that now I have eyed him carefully, I'm quite certain that he's no more fit to command a whale-ship than a St. Jago monkey.[6] In fact, tell him from me he's a baboon."

"He vows and declares, Monsieur, that the other whale, the dried one, is far more deadly than the blasted one; in fine, Monsieur, he conjures us, as we value our lives, to cut loose from these fish."

Instantly the captain ran forward, and in a loud voice commanded his crew to desist from hoisting the cutting-tackles, and at once cast loose the cables and chains confining the whales to the ship.

"What now?" said the Guernsey-man, when the captain had returned to them.

"Why, let me see; yes, you may as well tell him now that—that—in fact, tell him I've diddled him,[7] and (aside to himself) perhaps somebody else."

"He says, Monsieur, that he's very happy to have been of any service to us."

Hearing this, the captain vowed that they were the grateful parties (meaning himself and mate) and concluded by inviting Stubb down into his cabin to drink a bottle of Bordeaux.

"He wants you to take a glass of wine with him," said the interpreter.

"Thank him heartily; but tell him it's against my principles to drink with the man I've diddled. In fact, tell him I must go."

6. Monkey from that Portuguese island in the Cape Verdes, in the Atlantic.
7. Cheated, swindled. *Screwed* is the best modern equivalent because *diddle* also has a sexual meaning.

"He says, Monsieur, that his principles won't admit of his drinking; but that if Monsieur wants to live another day to drink, then Monsieur had best drop all four boats, and pull the ship away from these whales, for it's so calm they won't drift."

By this time Stubb was over the side, and getting into his boat, hailed the Guernsey-man to this effect,—that having a long tow-line in his boat, he would do what he could to help them, by pulling out the lighter whale of the two from the ship's side. While the Frenchman's boats, then, were engaged in towing the ship one way, Stubb benevolently towed away at his whale the other way, ostentatiously slacking out a most unusually long towline.

Presently a breeze sprang up; Stubb feigned to cast off from the whale; hoisting his boats, the Frenchman soon increased his distance, while the Pequod slid in between him and Stubb's whale. Whereupon Stubb quickly pulled to the floating body, and hailing the Pequod to give notice of his intentions, at once proceeded to reap the fruit of his unrighteous cunning. Seizing his sharp boat-spade, he commenced an excavation in the body, a little behind the side fin. You would almost have thought he was digging a cellar there in the sea; and when at length his spade struck against the gaunt ribs, it was like turning up old Roman tiles and pottery buried in fat English loam. His boat's crew were all in high excitement, eagerly helping their chief, and looking as anxious as gold-hunters.

And all the time numberless fowls were diving, and ducking, and screaming, and yelling, and fighting around them. Stubb was beginning to look disappointed, especially as the horrible nosegay increased, when suddenly from out the very heart of this plague, there stole a faint stream of perfume, which flowed through the tide of bad smells without being absorbed by it, as one river will flow into and then along with another, without at all blending with it for a time.

"I have it, I have it," cried Stubb, with delight, striking something in the subterranean regions, "a purse! a purse!"

Dropping his spade, he thrust both hands in, and drew out handfuls of something that looked like ripe Windsor soap, or rich mottled old cheese; very unctuous and savory withal. You might easily dent it with your thumb; it is of a hue between yellow and ash color. And this, good friends, is ambergris, worth a gold guinea an ounce to any druggist. Some six handfuls were obtained; but more was unavoidably lost in the sea, and still more, perhaps, might have been secured were it not for impatient Ahab's loud command to Stubb to desist, and come on board, else the ship would bid them good bye.

CHAPTER 92

AMBERGRIS[1]

Now this ambergris is a very curious substance, and so important as an article of commerce, that in 1791 a certain Nantucket-born Captain Coffin was examined at the bar of the English House of Commons on that subject. For at that time, and indeed until a comparatively late day, the precise

1. Mansfield and Vincent (p. 793) cite Beale as Melville's main source in this chapter.

origin of ambergris remained, like amber itself, a problem to the learned. Though the word ambergris is but the French compound for grey amber, yet the two substances are quite distinct. For amber, though at times found on the sea-coast, is also dug up in some far inland soils, whereas ambergris is never found except upon the sea. Besides, amber is a hard, transparent, brittle, odorless substance, used for mouth-pieces to pipes, for beads and ornaments; but ambergris is soft, waxy, and so highly fragrant and spicy, that it is largely used in perfumery, in pastiles,[2] precious candles, hair-powders, and pomatum. The Turks use it in cooking, and also carry it to Mecca, for the same purpose that frankincense is carried to St. Peter's in Rome. Some wine merchants drop a few grains into claret, to flavor it.

Who would think, then, that such fine ladies and gentlemen should regale themselves with an essence found in the inglorious bowels of a sick whale! Yet so it is. By some, ambergris is supposed to be the cause, and by others the effect, of the dyspepsia in the whale. How to cure such a dyspepsia it were hard to say, unless by administering three or four boat loads of Brandreth's pills,[3] and then running out of harm's way, as laborers do in blasting rocks.

I have forgotten to say that there were found in this ambergris, certain hard, round, bony plates, which at first Stubb thought might be sailors' trousers buttons; but it afterwards turned out that they were nothing more than pieces of small squid bones embalmed in that manner.

Now that the incorruption of this most fragrant ambergris should be found in the heart of such decay; is this nothing? Bethink thee of that saying of St. Paul in Corinthians,[4] about corruption and incorruption; how that we are sown in dishonor, but raised in glory. And likewise call to mind that saying of Paracelsus about what it is that maketh the best musk.[5] Also forget not the strange fact that of all things of ill-savor, Cologne-water, in its rudimental manufacturing stages, is the worst.

I should like to conclude the chapter with the above appeal, but cannot, owing to my anxiety to repel a charge often made against whalemen, and which, in the estimation of some already biased minds, might be considered as indirectly substantiated by what has been said of the Frenchman's two whales. Elsewhere in this volume the slanderous aspersion has been disproved, that the vocation of whaling is throughout a slatternly, untidy business. But there is another thing to rebut. They hint that all whales always smell bad. Now how did this odious stigma originate?

I opine, that it is plainly traceable to the first arrival of the Greenland whaling ships[6] in London, more than two centuries ago. Because those whalemen did not then, and do not now, try out their oil at sea as the Southern ships have always done; but cutting up the fresh blubber in small bits, thrust it through the bung holes of large casks, and carry it home in that manner; the shortness of the season in those Icy Seas, and the sudden and violent storms to which they are exposed, forbidding any other course. The consequence is, that upon breaking into the hold, and unloading one of these whale cemeteries, in the Greenland dock, a savor is given forth

2. Sweet pills.
3. A widely advertised laxative.
4. 1 Corinthians 15.42–43: "So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption; It is sown in dishonour; it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness; it is raised in power."
5. "What it is" is excrement.
6. Such ships were unloaded at a specific "Greenland Dock."

somewhat similar to that arising from excavating an old city grave-yard, for the foundations of a Lying-in Hospital.

I partly surmise also, that this wicked charge against whalers may be likewise imputed to the existence on the coast of Greenland, in former times, of a Dutch village called Schmerenburgh or Smeerenberg, which latter name is the one used by the learned Fogo Von Slack,[7] in his great work on Smells, a textbook on that subject. As its name imports (smeer, fat; berg, to put up), this village was founded in order to afford a place for the blubber of the Dutch whale fleet to be tried out, without being taken home to Holland for that purpose. It was a collection of furnaces, fat-kettles, and oil sheds; and when the works were in full operation certainly gave forth no very pleasant savor. But all this is quite different with a South Sea Sperm Whaler; which in a voyage of four years perhaps, after completely filling her hold with oil, does not, perhaps, consume fifty days in the business of boiling out; and in the state that it is casked, the oil is nearly scentless. The truth is, that living or dead, if but decently treated, whales as a species are by no means creatures of ill odor; nor can whalemen be recognised, as the people of the middle ages affected to detect a Jew in the company, by the nose. Nor indeed can the whale possibly be otherwise than fragrant, when, as a general thing, he enjoys such high health; taking abundance of exercise; always out of doors; though, it is true, seldom in the open air. I say, that the motion of a Sperm Whale's flukes above water dispenses a perfume, as when a musk-scented lady rustles her dress in a warm parlor. What then shall I liken the Sperm Whale to for fragrance, considering his magnitude? Must it not be to that famous elephant, with jewelled tusks, and redolent with myrrh, which was led out of an Indian town to do honor to Alexander the Great?

CHAPTER 93

THE CASTAWAY

It was but some few days after encountering the Frenchman, that a most significant event befell the most insignificant of the Pequod's crew; an event most lamentable; and which ended in providing the sometimes madly merry and predestinated craft with a living and ever accompanying prophecy of whatever shattered sequel might prove her own.

Now, in the whale ship, it is not every one that goes in the boats. Some few hands are reserved called ship-keepers, whose province it is to work the vessel while the boats are pursuing the whale. As a general thing, these ship-keepers are as hardy fellows as the men comprising the boats' crews. But if there happen to be an unduly slender, clumsy, or timorous wight in the ship, that wight is certain to be made a ship-keeper. It was so in the Pequod with the little negro Pippin by nick-name, Pip by abbreviation. Poor Pip! ye have heard of him before; ye must remember his tambourine on that dramatic midnight, so gloomy-jolly.

In outer aspect, Pip and Dough-Boy made a match, like a black pony and a white one, of equal developments, though of dissimilar color, driven in one eccentric span. But while hapless Dough-Boy was by nature dull and torpid in his intellects, Pip, though over tender-hearted, was at bottom

7. Another of Melville's mocking names for Scoresby.

very bright, with that pleasant, genial, jolly brightness peculiar to his tribe; a tribe, which ever enjoy all holidays and festivities with finer, freer relish than any other race. For blacks, the year's calendar should show naught but three hundred and sixty-five Fourth of Julys and New Year's Days. Nor smile so, while I write that this little black was brilliant, for even blackness has its brilliancy; behold yon lustrous ebony, panelled in king's cabinets. But Pip loved life, and all life's peaceable securities; so that the panic-striking business in which he had somehow unaccountably become entrapped, had most sadly blurred his brightness; though, as ere long will be seen, what was thus temporarily subdued in him, in the end was destined to be luridly illumined by strange wild fires, that fictitiously showed him off to ten times the natural lustre with which in his native Tolland County in Connecticut, he had once enlivened many a fiddler's frolic on the green; and at melodious even-tide, with his gay ha-ha! had turned the round horizon into one star-belled tambourine. So, though in the clear air of day, suspended against a blue-veined neck, the pure-watered diamond drop will healthful glow; yet, when the cunning jeweller would show you the diamond in its most impressive lustre, he lays it against a gloomy ground, and then lights it up, not by the sun, but by some unnatural gases. Then come out those fiery effulgences, infernally superb; then the evil-blazing diamond, once the divinest symbol of the crystal skies, looks like some crown-jewel stolen from the King of Hell. But let us to the story.

It came to pass, that in the ambergris affair Stubb's after-oarsman chanced so to sprain his hand, as for a time to become quite maimed; and, temporarily, Pip was put into his place.

The first time Stubb lowered with him, Pip evinced much nervousness; but happily, for that time, escaped close contact with the whale; and therefore came off not altogether discreditably; though Stubb observing him, took care, afterwards, to exhort him to cherish his courageousness to the utmost, for he might often find it needful.

Now upon the second lowering, the boat paddled upon the whale; and as the fish received the darted iron, it gave its customary rap, which happened, in this instance, to be right under poor Pip's seat. The involuntary consternation of the moment caused him to leap, paddle in hand, out of the boat; and in such a way, that part of the slack whale line coming against his chest, he breasted it overboard with him, so as to become entangled in it, when at last plumping into the water. That instant the stricken whale started on a fierce run, the line swiftly straightened; and presto! poor Pip came all foaming up to the chocks of the boat, remorselessly dragged there by the line, which had taken several turns around his chest and neck.

Tashtego stood in the bows. He was full of the fire of the hunt. He hated Pip for a poltroon. Snatching the boat-knife from its sheath, he suspended its sharp edge over the line, and turning towards Stubb, exclaimed interrogatively, "Cut?" Meantime Pip's blue, choked face plainly looked, Do, for God's sake! All passed in a flash. In less than half a minute, this entire thing happened.

"Damn him, cut!"[1] roared Stubb; and so the whale was lost and Pip was saved.

1. Melville's shipmate Henry Hubbard annotated this passage in the third volume of *The Whale*, which Melville gave him in 1853: "Pip—Backus—his real name. I was in the boat at the time he made the leap overboard—Stubs=J Hall real name." See NN *Moby-Dick*, pp. 1005–20 and

So soon as he recovered himself, the poor little negro was assailed by yells and execrations from the crew. Tranquilly permitting these irregular cursings to evaporate, Stubb then in a plain, business-like, but still half humorous manner, cursed Pip officially; and that done, unofficially gave him much wholesome advice. The substance was, Never jump from a boat, Pip, except—but all the rest was indefinite, as the soundest advice ever is. Now, in general, *Stick to the boat,* is your true motto in whaling; but cases will sometimes happen when *Leap from the boat*, is still better. Moreover, as if perceiving at last that if he should give undiluted conscientious advice to Pip, he would be leaving him too wide a margin to jump in for the future; Stubb suddenly dropped all advice, and concluded with a peremptory command, "Stick to the boat, Pip, or by the Lord, I wont pick you up if you jump; mind that. We can't afford to lose whales by the likes of you; a whale would sell for thirty times what you would, Pip, in Alabama. Bear that in mind, and don't jump any more." Hereby perhaps Stubb indirectly hinted, that though man loves his fellow, yet man is a money-making animal, which propensity too often interferes with his benevolence.

But we are all in the hands of the Gods; and Pip jumped again. It was under very similar circumstances to the first performance; but this time he did not breast out the line; and hence, when the whale started to run, Pip was left behind on the sea, like a hurried traveller's trunk. Alas! Stubb was but too true to his word. It was a beautiful, bounteous, blue day; the spangled sea calm and cool, and flatly stretching away, all round, to the horizon, like gold-beater's skin[2] hammered out to the extremest. Bobbing up and down in that sea, Pip's ebon head showed like a head of cloves. No boat-knife was lifted when he fell so rapidly astern. Stubb's inexorable back was turned upon him; and the whale was winged. In three minutes, a whole mile of shoreless ocean was between Pip and Stubb. Out from the centre of the sea, poor Pip turned his crisp, curling, black head to the sun, another lonely castaway, though the loftiest and the brightest.

Now, in calm weather, to swim in the open ocean is as easy to the practised swimmer as to ride in a spring-carriage ashore. But the awful lonesomeness is intolerable. The intense concentration of self in the middle of such a heartless immensity, my God! who can tell it? Mark, how when sailors in a dead calm bathe in the open sea—mark how closely they hug their ship and only coast along her sides.

But had Stubb really abandoned the poor little negro to his fate? No; he did not mean to, at least. Because there were two boats in his wake, and he supposed, no doubt, that they would of course come up to Pip very quickly, and pick him up; though, indeed, such considerateness towards oarsmen jeopardized through their own timidity, is not always manifested by the hunters in all similar instances; and such instances not unfrequently occur; almost invariably in the fishery, a coward, so called, is marked with the same ruthless detestation peculiar to military navies and armies.

But it so happened, that those boats, without seeing Pip, suddenly spying whales close to them on one side, turned, and gave chase; and Stubb's boat was now so far away, and he and all his crew so intent upon his fish,

"The Captain and Crew of the *Acushnet* on Melville's Voyage," on p. 526 of this Norton Critical Edition.

2. Membrane of the large intestine of an ox, used to separate sheets of gold while they are being beaten thin into gold leaf.

that Pip's ringed horizon began to expand around him miserably. By the merest chance the ship itself at last rescued him; but from that hour the little negro went about the deck an idiot; such, at least, they said he was. The sea had jeeringly kept his finite body up, but drowned the infinite of his soul. Not drowned entirely, though. Rather carried down alive to wondrous depths, where strange shapes of the unwarped primal world glided to and fro before his passive eyes; and the miser-merman, Wisdom, revealed his hoarded heaps; and among the joyous, heartless, ever-juvenile eternities, Pip saw the multitudinous, God-omnipresent, coral insects, that out of the firmament of waters heaved the colossal orbs. He saw God's foot upon the treadle of the loom, and spoke it; and therefore his shipmates called him mad. So man's insanity is heaven's sense; and wandering from all mortal reason, man comes at last to that celestial thought, which, to reason, is absurd and frantic; and weal or woe, feels then uncompromised, indifferent as his God.

For the rest, blame not Stubb too hardly. The thing is common in that fishery; and in the sequel of the narrative, it will then be seen what like abandonment befell myself.

CHAPTER 94

A SQUEEZE OF THE HAND

That whale of Stubb's, so dearly purchased, was duly brought to the Pequod's side, where all those cutting and hoisting operations previously detailed,[1] were regularly gone through, even to the baling of the Heidelburgh Tun, or Case.

While some were occupied with this latter duty, others were employed in dragging away the larger tubs, so soon as filled with the sperm; and when the proper time arrived, this same sperm was carefully manipulated ere going to the try-works, of which anon.

It had cooled and crystallized to such a degree, that when, with several others, I sat down before a large Constantine's bath[2] of it, I found it strangely concreted into lumps, here and there rolling about in the liquid part. It was our business to squeeze these lumps back into fluid. A sweet and unctuous duty! No wonder that in old times this sperm was such a favorite cosmetic. Such a clearer! such a sweetener! such a softener! such a delicious mollifier! After having my hands in it for only a few minutes, my fingers felt like eels, and began, as it were, to serpentine and spiralize.

As I sat there at my ease, cross-legged on the deck; after the bitter exertion at the windlass; under a blue tranquil sky; the ship under indolent sail, and gliding so serenely along; as I bathed my hands among those soft, gentle globules of infiltrated tissues, woven almost within the hour; as they richly broke to my fingers, and discharged all their opulence, like fully ripe grapes their wine; as I snuffed up that uncontaminated aroma,—literally and truly, like the smell of spring violets; I declare to you, that for the time I lived as in a musky meadow; I forgot all about our horrible oath; in that

1. In Ch. 77.
2. The Roman emperor Constantine the Great (288?–337) died after an attempt to regain his health at the baths of Helenopolis, in Greece.

inexpressible sperm, I washed my hands and my heart of it; I almost began to credit the old Paracelsan superstition that sperm is of rare virtue in allaying the heat of anger: while bathing in that bath, I felt divinely free from all ill-will, or petulence,[3] or malice, of any sort whatsoever.

Squeeze! squeeze! squeeze! all the morning long; I squeezed that sperm till I myself almost melted into it; I squeezed that sperm till a strange sort of insanity came over me; and I found myself unwittingly squeezing my co-laborers' hands in it, mistaking their hands for the gentle globules. Such an abounding, affectionate, friendly, loving feeling did this avocation beget; that at last I was continually squeezing their hands, and looking up into their eyes sentimentally; as much as to say,—Oh! my dear fellow beings, why should we longer cherish any social acerbities, or know the slightest ill-humor or envy! Come; let us squeeze hands all round; nay, let us all squeeze ourselves into each other; let us squeeze ourselves universally into the very milk and sperm of kindness.

Would that I could keep squeezing that sperm for ever! For now, since by many prolonged, repeated experiences, I have perceived that in all cases man must eventually lower, or at least shift, his conceit of attainable felicity; not placing it anywhere in the intellect or the fancy; but in the wife, the heart, the bed, the table, the saddle, the fire-side, the country; now that I have perceived all this, I am ready to squeeze case eternally. In thoughts of the visions of the night,[4] I saw long rows of angels in paradise, each with his hands in a jar of spermaceti.

* * * * * * * * *

Now, while discoursing of sperm, it behooves to speak of other things akin to it, in the business of preparing the sperm whale for the try-works.

First comes white-horse, so called, which is obtained from the tapering part of the fish, and also from the thicker portions of his flukes. It is tough with congealed tendons—a wad of muscle—but still contains some oil. After being severed from the whale, the white-horse is first cut into portable oblongs ere going to the mincer. They look much like blocks of Berkshire marble.

Plum-pudding is the term bestowed upon certain fragmentary parts of the whale's flesh, here and there adhering to the blanket of blubber, and often participating to a considerable degree in its unctuousness. It is a most refreshing, convivial, beautiful object to behold. As its name imports, it is of an exceedingly rich, mottled tint, with a bestreaked snowy and golden ground, dotted with spots of the deepest crimson and purple. It is plums of rubies, in pictures of citron. Spite of reason, it is hard to keep yourself from eating it. I confess, that once I stole behind the foremast to try it. It tasted something as I should conceive a royal cutlet from the thigh of Louis le Gros[5] might have tasted, supposing him to have been killed the first day after the venison season, and that particular venison season contemporary with an unusually fine vintage of the vineyards of Champagne.

There is another substance, and a very singular one, which turns up in the course of this business, but which I feel it to be very puzzling

3. A common spelling for *petulance*.
4. Job 4.13–14: "In thoughts from the visions of the night, when deep sleep falleth on men, Fear came upon me, and trembling, which made all my bones to shake."
5. Louis VI (1081–1137), king of France, called here Louis the Fat.

adequately to describe. It is called slobgollion; an appellation original with the whalemen, and even so is the nature of the substance. It is an ineffably oozy, stringy affair, most frequently found in the tubs of sperm, after a prolonged squeezing, and subsequent decanting. I hold it to be the wondrously thin, ruptured membranes of the case, coalescing.

Gurry, so called, is a term properly belonging to right whalemen, but sometimes incidentally used by the sperm fishermen. It designates the dark, glutinous substance which is scraped off the back of the Greenland or right whale, and much of which covers the decks of those inferior souls who hunt that ignoble Leviathan.

Nippers. Strictly this word is not indigenous to the whale's vocabulary. But as applied by whalemen, it becomes so. A whaleman's nipper is a short firm strip of tendinous stuff cut from the tapering part of Leviathan's tail: it averages an inch in thickness, and for the rest, is about the size of the iron part of a hoe. Edgewise moved along the oily deck, it operates like a leathern squilgee; and by nameless blandishments, as of magic, allures along with it all impurities.

But to learn all about these recondite matters, your best way is at once to descend into the blubber-room, and have a long talk with its inmates. This place has previously been mentioned[6] as the receptacle for the blanket-pieces, when stript and hoisted from the whale. When the proper time arrives for cutting up its contents, this apartment is a scene of terror to all tyros, especially by night. On one side, lit by a dull lantern, a space has been left clear for the workmen. They generally go in pairs,—a pike-and-gaff-man and a spade-man. The whaling-pike is similar to a frigate's boarding-weapon of the same name. The gaff is something like a boat-hook. With his gaff, the gaffman hooks on to a sheet of blubber, and strives to hold it from slipping, as the ship pitches and lurches about. Meanwhile, the spade-man stands on the sheet itself, perpendicularly chopping it into the portable horse-pieces. This spade is sharp as hone can make it; the spademan's feet are shoeless; the thing he stands on will sometimes irresistibly slide away from him, like a sledge. If he cuts off one of his own toes, or one of his assistant's, would you be very much astonished? Toes are scarce among veteran blubber-room men.

CHAPTER 95

THE CASSOCK

Had you stepped on board the Pequod at a certain juncture of this post-mortemizing of the whale; and had you strolled forward nigh the windlass, pretty sure am I that you would have scanned with no small curiosity a very strange, enigmatical object,[1] which you would have seen there, lying along lengthwise in the lee scuppers. Not the wondrous cistern in the whale's huge head; not the prodigy of his unhinged lower jaw; not the miracle of his symmetrical tail; none of these would so surprise you, as half a glimpse of that unaccountable cone,—longer than a Kentuckian is tall, nigh a foot in diameter at the base, and jet-black as Yojo, the ebony

6. In the last paragraph of Ch. 67.
1. The penis of the whale.

idol of Queequeg. And an idol, indeed, it is; or, rather, in old times, its likeness was. Such an idol as that found in the secret groves of Queen Maachah in Judea; and for worshipping which, King Asa, her son, did depose her, and destroyed the idol, and burnt it for an abomination at the brook Kedron, as darkly[2] set forth in the 15th chapter of the first book of Kings.[3]

Look at the sailor, called the mincer, who now comes along, and assisted by two allies, heavily backs the grandissimus, as the mariners call it, and with bowed shoulders, staggers off with it as if he were a grenadier carrying a dead comrade from the field. Extending it upon the forecastle deck, he now proceeds cylindrically to remove its dark pelt, as an African hunter the pelt of a boa. This done he turns the pelt inside out, like a pantaloon leg; gives it a good stretching, so as almost to double its diameter; and at last hangs it, well spread, in the rigging, to dry. Ere long, it is taken down; when removing some three feet of it, towards the pointed extremity, and then cutting two slits for arm-holes at the other end, he lengthwise slips himself bodily into it. The mincer now stands before you invested in the full canonicals of his calling. Immemorial to all his order, this investiture alone will adequately protect him, while employed in the peculiar functions of his office.

That office consists in mincing the horse-pieces of blubber for the pots; an operation which is conducted at a curious wooden horse, planted endwise against the bulwarks, and with a capacious tub beneath it, into which the minced pieces drop, fast as the sheets from a rapt orator's desk. Arrayed in decent black; occupying a conspicuous pulpit; intent on bible leaves; what a candidate for an archbishoprick,[4] what a lad for a Pope were this mincer![5]

CHAPTER 96

THE TRY-WORKS

Besides her hoisted boats, an American whaler is outwardly distinguished by her try-works.[1] She presents the curious anomaly of the most solid masonry joining with oak and hemp in constituting the completed ship. It is as if from the open field a brick-kiln were transported to her planks.

The try-works are planted between the foremast and main-mast, the most roomy part of the deck. The timbers beneath are of a peculiar strength, fitted to sustain the weight of an almost solid mass of brick and mortar, some ten feet by eight square, and five in height. The foundation does not penetrate the deck, but the masonry is firmly secured to the surface by ponderous knees of iron bracing it on all sides, and screwing it down to the timbers. On the flanks it is cased with wood, and at top

2. Obscurely.
3. 1 Kings 15.11–13: "And Asa did that which was right in the eyes of the Lord, as did David his father. And he took away the sodomites out of the land, and removed all the idols that his fathers had made. And also Maachah his mother, even her he removed from being queen, because she had made an idol in a grove; and Asa destroyed her idol, and burnt it by the brook Kidron."
4. The archaic spelling emphasizes the phallic pun.
5. Bible leaves! Bible leaves! This is the invariable cry from the mates to the mincer. It enjoins him to be careful, and cut his work into as thin slices as possible, inasmuch as by so doing the business of boiling out the oil is much accelerated, and its quantity considerably increased, besides perhaps improving it in quality. [Melville's note.]

1. See the illustrations on pp. 444 and 453.

completely covered by a large, sloping, battened hatchway. Removing this hatch we expose the great try-pots, two in number, and each of several barrels' capacity. When not in use, they are kept remarkably clean. Sometimes they are polished with soapstone and sand, till they shine within like silver punch-bowls. During the night-watches some cynical old sailors will crawl into them and coil themselves away there for a nap. While employed in polishing them—one man in each pot, side by side—many confidential communications are carried on, over the iron lips. It is a place also for profound mathematical meditation. It was in the left hand try-pot of the Pequod, with the soapstone diligently circling round me, that I was first indirectly struck by the remarkable fact, that in geometry all bodies gliding along the cycloid, my soapstone for example, will descend from any point in precisely the same time.

Removing the fire-board from the front of the try-works, the bare masonry of that side is exposed, penetrated by the two iron mouths of the furnaces, directly underneath the pots. These mouths are fitted with heavy doors of iron. The intense heat of the fire is prevented from communicating itself to the deck, by means of a shallow reservoir extending under the entire inclosed surface of the works. By a tunnel inserted at the rear, this reservoir is kept replenished with water as fast as it evaporates. There are no external chimneys; they open direct from the rear wall. And here let us go back for a moment.

It was about nine o'clock at night that the Pequod's try-works were first started on this present voyage. It belonged to Stubb to oversee the business.

"All ready there? Off hatch, then, and start her. You cook, fire the works." This was an easy thing, for the carpenter had been thrusting his shavings into the furnace throughout the passage. Here be it said that in a whaling voyage the first fire in the try-works has to be fed for a time with wood. After that no wood is used, except as a means of quick ignition to the staple fuel. In a word, after being tried out, the crisp, shrivelled blubber, now called scraps or fritters, still contains considerable of its unctuous properties. These fritters feed the flames. Like a plethoric burning martyr, or a self-consuming misanthrope, once ignited, the whale supplies his own fuel and burns by his own body. Would that he consumed his own smoke! for his smoke is horrible to inhale, and inhale it you must, and not only that, but you must live in it for the time. It has an unspeakable, wild, Hindoo odor[2] about it, such as may lurk in the vicinity of funereal pyres. It smells like the left wing of the day of judgment;[3] it is an argument for the pit.

By midnight the works were in full operation. We were clear from the carcase; sail had been made; the wind was freshening; the wild ocean darkness was intense. But that darkness was licked up by the fierce flames, which at intervals forked forth from the sooty flues, and illuminated every lofty rope in the rigging, as with the famed Greek fire. The burning ship drove on, as if remorselessly commissioned to some vengeful deed. So the pitch and sulphur-freighted brigs of the bold Hydriote, Canaris,[4] issuing

2. As from a Hindu cremation.
3. According to Matthew 25.31–33, on the day Jesus comes in judgment the "goats" (those condemned to hell) shall be set "on the left," the sheep (those who will go to heaven) on his right.
4. The Greek hero who developed this fire-ship strategy in 1822, during the Greek war for independence from the Turks, a cause with which the younger English Romantics and most Americans sympathized keenly during Melville's boyhood.

from their midnight harbors, with broad sheets of flame for sails, bore down upon the Turkish frigates, and folded them in conflagrations.

The hatch, removed from the top of the works, now afforded a wide hearth in front of them. Standing on this were the Tartarean shapes of the pagan harpooneers, always the whale-ship's stokers. With huge pronged poles they pitched hissing masses of blubber into the scalding pots, or stirred up the fires beneath, till the snaky flames darted, curling, out of the doors to catch them by the feet. The smoke rolled away in sullen heaps. To every pitch of the ship there was a pitch of the boiling oil, which seemed all eagerness to leap into their faces. Opposite the mouth of the works, on the further side of the wide wooden hearth, was the windlass. This served for a sea-sofa. Here lounged the watch, when not otherwise employed, looking into the red heat of the fire, till their eyes felt scorched in their heads. Their tawny features, now all begrimed with smoke and sweat, their matted beards, and the contrasting barbaric brilliancy of their teeth, all these were strangely revealed in the capricious emblazonings of the works. As they narrated to each other their unholy adventures, their tales of terror told in words of mirth; as their uncivilized laughter forked upwards out of them, like the flames from the furnace; as to and fro, in their front, the harpooneers wildly gesticulated with their huge pronged forks and dippers; as the wind howled on, and the sea leaped, and the ship groaned and dived, and yet steadfastly shot her red hell further and further into the blackness of the sea and the night, and scornfully champed the white bone in her mouth, and viciously spat round her on all sides; then the rushing Pequod, freighted with savages, and laden with fire, and burning a corpse, and plunging into that blackness of darkness, seemed the material counterpart of her monomaniac commander's soul.

So seemed it to me, as I stood at her helm, and for long hours silently guided the way of this fire-ship on the sea. Wrapped, for that interval, in darkness myself, I but the better saw the redness, the madness, the ghastliness of others. The continual sight of the fiend shapes before me, capering half in smoke and half in fire, these at last begat kindred visions in my soul, so soon as I began to yield to that unaccountable drowsiness which ever would come over me at a midnight helm.

But that night, in particular, a strange (and ever since inexplicable) thing occurred to me. Starting from a brief standing sleep, I was horribly conscious of something fatally wrong. The jaw-bone tiller smote my side, which leaned against it; in my ears was the low hum of sails, just beginning to shake in the wind; I thought my eyes were open; I was half conscious of putting my fingers to the lids and mechanically stretching them still further apart. But, spite of all this, I could see no compass before me to steer by; though it seemed but a minute since I had been watching the card, by the steady binnacle lamp illuminating it. Nothing seemed before me but a jet gloom, now and then made ghastly by flashes of redness. Uppermost was the impression, that whatever swift, rushing thing I stood on was not so much bound to any haven ahead as rushing from all havens astern. A stark, bewildered feeling, as of death, came over me. Convulsively my hands grasped the tiller, but with the crazy conceit that the tiller was, somehow, in some enchanted way, inverted. My God! what is the matter with me? thought I. Lo! in my brief sleep I had turned myself about, and was fronting the ship's stern, with my back to her prow and the

compass. In an instant I faced back, just in time to prevent the vessel from flying up into the wind, and very probably capsizing her. How glad and how grateful the relief from this unnatural hallucination of the night, and the fatal contingency of being brought by the lee!

Look not too long in the face of the fire, O man! Never dream with thy hand on the helm! Turn not thy back to the compass; accept the first hint of the hitching tiller; believe not the artificial fire, when its redness makes all things look ghastly. To-morrow, in the natural sun, the skies will be bright; those who glared like devils in the forking flames, the morn will show in far other, at least gentler, relief; the glorious, golden, glad sun, the only true lamp—all others but liars!

Nevertheless the sun hides not Virginia's Dismal Swamp, nor Rome's accursed Campagna, nor wide Sahara, nor all the millions of miles of deserts and of griefs beneath the moon. The sun hides not the ocean, which is the dark side of this earth, and which is two thirds of this earth. So, therefore, that mortal man who hath more of joy than sorrow in him, that mortal man cannot be true—not true, or undeveloped. With books the same. The truest of all men was the Man of Sorrows,[5] and the truest of all books is Solomon's, and Ecclesiastes[6] is the fine hammered steel of woe. "All is vanity." ALL. This wilful world hath not got hold of unchristian Solomon's wisdom yet. But he who dodges hospitals and jails, and walks fast crossing grave-yards, and would rather talk of operas than hell; calls Cowper, Young, Pascal, Rousseau,[7] poor devils all of sick men; and throughout a care-free lifetime swears by Rabelais[8] as passing wise, and therefore jolly;—not that man is fitted to sit down on tomb-stones, and break the green damp mould with unfathomably wondrous Solomon.

But even Solomon, he says, "the man that wandereth out of the way of understanding shall remain" (*i. e.* even while living) "in the congregation of the dead."[9] Give not thyself up, then, to fire, lest it invert thee, deaden thee; as for the time it did me. There is a wisdom that is woe; but there is a woe that is madness. And there is a Catskill eagle in some souls that can alike dive down into the blackest gorges, and soar out of them again and become invisible in the sunny spaces. And even if he for ever flies within the gorge, that gorge is in the mountains; so that even in his lowest swoop the mountain eagle is still higher than other birds upon the plain, even though they soar.

CHAPTER 97

THE LAMP

Had you descended from the Pequod's try-works to the Pequod's forecastle, where the off duty watch were sleeping, for one single moment you

5. Jesus, from a phrase in Isaiah 53.3: "He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief."
6. Ecclesiastes, the biblical book in which "All is vanity" occurs (1.2), was attributed to Solomon.
7. Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712–1778), French political philosopher and writer. William Cowper (1731–1800), English poet, author of *Olney Hymns*, *The Task*, and "The Castaway." Edward Young (1683–1765), English poet, author of *Night Thoughts*. Blaise Pascal (1623–1662), French mathematician, physicist, and philosopher.
8. Françoise Rabelais (1494–1553), French satirist and humorist whose views in his *Pantagruel* (1532 or 1533) and *Gargantua* (1534) some readers take as "passing wise, and therefore jolly," the contrary of Solomon's attitude.
9. Proverbs 21.16: "The man that wandereth out of the way of understanding shall remain in the congregation of the dead."

would have almost thought you were standing in some illuminated shrine of canonized kings and counsellors. There they lay in their triangular oaken vaults, each mariner a chiselled muteness; a score of lamps flashing upon his hooded eyes.

In merchantmen, oil for the sailor is more scarce than the milk of queens. To dress in the dark, and eat in the dark, and stumble in darkness to his pallet, this is his usual lot. But the whaleman, as he seeks the food of light, so he lives in light. He makes his berth an Aladdin's lamp,[1] and lays him down in it; so that in the pitchiest night the ship's black hull still houses an illumination.

See with what entire freedom the whaleman takes his handful of lamps—often but old bottles and vials, though—to the copper cooler at the try-works, and replenishes them there, as mugs of ale at a vat. He burns, too, the purest of oil, in its unmanufactured, and, therefore, unvitiated state; a fluid unknown to solar, lunar, or astral contrivances ashore. It is sweet as early grass butter in April. He goes and hunts for his oil, so as to be sure of its freshness and genuineness, even as the traveller on the prairie hunts up his own supper of game.

CHAPTER 98

STOWING DOWN AND CLEANING[1] UP

Already has it been related how the great leviathan is afar off descried from the mast-head; how he is chased over the watery moors, and slaughtered in the valleys of the deep; how he is then towed alongside and beheaded; and how (on the principle which entitled the headsman of old to the garments in which the beheaded was killed) his great padded surtout becomes the property of his executioner; how, in due time, he is condemned to the pots, and, like Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego,[2] his spermaceti, oil, and bone pass unscathed through the fire;—but now it remains to conclude the last chapter of this part of the description by rehearsing—singing, if I may—the romantic proceeding of decanting off his oil into the casks and striking them down into the hold, where once again leviathan returns to his native profundities, sliding along beneath the surface as before; but, alas! never more to rise and blow.

While still warm, the oil, like hot punch, is received into the six-barrel casks; and while, perhaps, the ship is pitching and rolling this way and that in the midnight sea, the enormous casks are slewed round and headed over, end for end, and sometimes perilously scoot across the slippery deck, like so many land slides, till at last man-handled and stayed in their course; and all round the hoops, rap, rap, go as many hammers as can play upon them, for now, *ex officio*,[3] every sailor is a cooper.

1. Magical lamp in *Arabian Nights*.

1. *Clearing* in the 1851 edition. The chapter title in A&E and later editions is redundant, "clearing up" repeating "stowing down." In the second part of the chapter Melville emphasizes cleaning (not clearing) with phrases such as "clensing virtue," "faithfully cleansed," "potent lye" (a harsh cleanser), "cleanse the ship," "clean frocks," "cleansed ourselves," and "clean tabernacles." This third NCE introduces this emendation, an easy misreading of Melville's hand.

2. In Daniel 3, three Jews whom the Assyrian king Nebuchadnezzar had thrown into the fiery furnace; when the king looks into the furnace, he sees "four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire, and they have no hurt; and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God."

3. By virtue of an office; here, part of a sailor's expected skills (if you're a sailor, you're also a cooper).

At length, when the last pint is casked, and all is cool, then the great hatchways are unsealed, the bowels of the ship are thrown open, and down go the casks to their final rest in the sea. This done, the hatches are replaced, and hermetically closed, like a closet walled up.

In the sperm fishery, this is perhaps one of the most remarkable incidents in all the business of whaling. One day the planks stream with freshets of blood and oil; on the sacred quarterdeck enormous masses of the whale's head are profanely piled; great rusty casks lie about, as in a brewery yard; the smoke from the try-works has besooted all the bulwarks; the mariners go about suffused with unctuousness; the entire ship seems great leviathan himself; while on all hands the din is deafening.

But a day or two after, you look about you, and prick your ears in this selfsame ship; and were it not for the tell-tale boats and try-works, you would all but swear you trod some silent merchant vessel, with a most scrupulously neat commander. The unmanufactured sperm oil possesses a singularly cleansing virtue. This is the reason why the decks never look so white as just after what they call an affair of oil. Besides, from the ashes of the burned scraps of the whale, a potent ley[4] is readily made; and whenever any adhesiveness from the back of the whale remains clinging to the side, that ley quickly exterminates it. Hands go diligently along the bulwarks, and with buckets of water and rags restore them to their full tidiness. The soot is brushed from the lower rigging. All the numerous implements which have been in use are likewise faithfully cleansed and put away. The great hatch is scrubbed and placed upon the try-works, completely hiding the pots; every cask is out of sight; all tackles are coiled in unseen nooks; and when by the combined and simultaneous industry of almost the entire ship's company, the whole of this conscientious duty is at last concluded, then the crew themselves proceed to their own ablutions; shift themselves from top to toe; and finally issue to the immaculate deck, fresh and all aglow, as bridegrooms new-leaped from out the daintiest Holland.[5]

Now, with elated step, they pace the planks in twos and threes, and humorously discourse of parlors, sofas, carpets, and fine cambrics; propose to mat the deck; think of having hangings to the top; object not to taking tea by moonlight on the piazza of the forecastle. To hint to such musked mariners of oil, and bone, and blubber, were little short of audacity. They know not the thing you distantly allude to. Away, and bring us napkins!

But mark: aloft there, at the three mast heads, stand three men intent on spying out more whales, which, if caught, infallibly will again soil the old oaken furniture, and drop at least one small grease-spot somewhere. Yes; and many is the time, when, after the severest uninterrupted labors, which know no night; continuing straight through for ninety-six hours; when from the boat, where they have swelled their wrists with all day rowing on the Line,—they only step to the deck to carry vast chains, and heave the heavy windlass, and cut and slash, yea, and in their very sweatings to be smoked and burned anew by the combined fires of the equatorial sun and the equatorial try-works; when, on the heel of all this, they have finally bestirred themselves to cleanse the ship, and make a spotless dairy room of

4. Also spelled Iye; cleansing alkaline soap made from ashes (here, ashes from the "fritters" described in Ch. 96).
5. Fine bed sheets made of cotton or linen cloth from that country.

it; many is the time the poor fellows, just buttoning the necks of their clean frocks, are startled by the cry of "There she blows!" and away they fly to fight another whale, and go through the whole weary thing again. Oh! my friends, but this is man-killing! Yet this is life. For hardly have we mortals by long toilings extracted from this world's vast bulk its small but valuable sperm; and then, with weary patience, cleansed ourselves from its defilements, and learned to live here in clean tabernacles of the soul; hardly is this done, when—*There she blows!*—the ghost is spouted up, and away we sail to fight some other world, and go through young life's old routine again.

Oh! the metempsychosis![6] Oh! Pythagoras, that in bright Greece, two thousand years ago, did die, so good, so wise, so mild; I sailed with thee along the Peruvian coast last voyage—and, foolish as I am, taught thee, a green simple boy, how to splice a rope!

CHAPTER 99

THE DOUBLOON

Ere now it has been related how Ahab was wont to pace his quarter-deck, taking regular turns at either limit, the binnacle and mainmast; but in the multiplicity of other things requiring narration it has not been added how that sometimes in these walks, when most plunged in his mood, he was wont to pause in turn at each spot, and stand there strangely eyeing the particular object before him. When he halted before the binnacle, with his glance fastened on the pointed needle in the compass, that glance shot like a javelin with the pointed intensity of his purpose; and when resuming his walk he again paused before the mainmast, then, as the same riveted glance fastened upon the riveted gold coin there, he still wore the same aspect of nailed firmness, only dashed with a certain wild longing, if not hopefulness.

But one morning, turning to pass the doubloon, he seemed to be newly attracted by the strange figures and inscriptions stamped on it, as though now for the first time beginning to interpret for himself in some monomaniac way whatever significance might lurk in them. And some certain significance lurks in all things, else all things are little worth, and the round world itself but an empty cipher, except to sell by the cartload, as they do hills about Boston, to fill up some morass in the Milky Way.

Now this doubloon was of purest, virgin gold, raked somewhere out of the heart of gorgeous hills, whence, east and west, over golden sands, the head-waters of many a Pactolus[1] flow. And though now nailed amidst all the rustiness of iron bolts and the verdigris of copper spikes, yet, untouchable and immaculate to any foulness, it still preserved its Quito[2] glow. Nor, though placed amongst a ruthless crew and every hour passed by ruthless hands, and through the livelong nights shrouded with thick darkness which might cover any pilfering approach, nevertheless every sunrise found the doubloon where the sunset left it last. For it was set apart

6. The passing of the soul of a dead person into a new body, a teaching attributed to the Greek philosopher Pythagoras (6th century B.C.E.).
1. Gold-bearing river in Asia Minor.
2. Capital of Ecuador, where rain seldom falls.

and sanctified to one awe-striking end; and however wanton in their sailor ways, one and all, the mariners revered it as the white whale's talisman. Sometimes they talked it over in the weary watch by night, wondering whose it was to be at last, and whether he would ever live to spend it.

Now those noble golden coins of South America are as medals of the sun and tropic token-pieces. Here palms, alpacas, and volcanoes; sun's disks and stars; ecliptics, horns-of-plenty, and rich banners waving, are in luxuriant profusion stamped; so that the precious gold seems almost to derive an added preciousness and enhancing glories, by passing through those fancy mints, so Spanishly poetic.

It so chanced that the doubloon of the Pequod was a most wealthy example of these things. On its round border it bore the letters, REPUBLICA DEL ECUADOR: QUITO. So this bright coin came from a country planted in the middle of the world, and beneath the great equator, and named after it; and it had been cast midway up the Andes, in the unwaning clime that knows no autumn. Zoned by those letters you saw the likeness of three Andes' summits; from one a flame; a tower on another; on the third a crowing cock; while arching over all was a segment of the partitioned zodiac, the signs all marked with their usual cabalistics,[3] and the keystone sun entering the equinoctial point at Libra.[4]

Before this equatorial coin, Ahab, not unobserved by others, was now pausing.

"There's something ever egotistical in mountain-tops and towers, and all other grand and lofty things; look here,—three peaks as proud as Lucifer.[5] The firm tower, that is Ahab; the volcano, that is Ahab; the courageous, the undaunted, and victorious fowl, that, too, is Ahab; all are Ahab; and this round gold is but the image of the rounder globe, which, like a magician's glass, to each and every man in turn but mirrors back his own mysterious self. Great pains, small gains for those who ask the world to solve them; it cannot solve itself. Methinks now this coined sun wears a ruddy face; but see! aye, he enters the sign of storms, the equinox! and but six months before he wheeled out of a former equinox at Aries![6] From storm to storm! So be it, then. Born in throes, 'tis fit that man should live in pains and die in pangs! So be it, then! Here's stout stuff for woe to work on. So be it, then."

"No fairy fingers can have pressed the gold, but devil's claws must have left their mouldings there since yesterday," murmured Starbuck to himself, leaning against the bulwarks. "The old man seems to read Belshazzar's awful writing.[7] I have never marked the coin inspectingly. He goes below; let me read. A dark valley between three mighty, heaven-abiding peaks, that almost seem the Trinity, in some faint earthly symbol. So in this vale of Death, God girds us round; and over all our gloom, the sun of Righteousness still shines a beacon and a hope. If we bend down our eyes, the dark vale shows her mouldy soil; but if we lift them, the bright sun meets our glance half way, to cheer. Yet, oh, the great sun is no fixture;

3. Esoteric symbols.
4. The seventh sign of the twelve in the zodiac, between Virgo and Scorpio, represented by a pair of scales.
5. Biblical name, applied by Milton to the demon of "Sinful Pride" (*Paradise Lost* 10.425).
6. Among the signs in the zodiac, Aries, the Ram, is the northern of the two equinoxial signs, both denoting periods of storms.
7. The writing, by the disembodied fingers of a man's hand, on King Belshazzar's wall (interpreted in Daniel 5).

and if, at midnight, we would fain snatch some sweet solace from him, we gaze for him in vain! This coin speaks wisely, mildly, truly, but still sadly to me. I will quit it, lest Truth shake me falsely."

"There now's the old Mogul," soliloquized Stubb by the try-works, "he's been twigging it; and there goes Starbuck from the same, and both with faces which I should say might be somewhere within nine fathoms long. And all from looking at a piece of gold, which did I have it now on Negro Hill or in Corlaer's Hook,[8] I'd not look at it very long ere spending it. Humph! in my poor, insignificant opinion, I regard this as queer. I have seen doubloons before now in my voyagings; your doubloons of old Spain, your doubloons of Peru, your doubloons of Chili, your doubloons of Bolivia, your doubloons of Popayan; with plenty of gold moidores and pistoles, and joes, and half joes, and quarter joes.[9] What then should there be in this doubloon of the Equator that is so killing wonderful? By Golconda![1] let me read it once. Halloa! here's signs and wonders truly! That, now, is what old Bowditch in his Epitome[2] calls the zodiac, and what my almanack below calls ditto. I'll get the almanack; and as I have heard devils can be raised with Daboll's arithmetic, I'll try my hand at raising a meaning out of these queer curvicues here with the Massachusetts calendar.[3] Here's the book. Let's see now. Signs and wonders;[4] and the sun, he's always among 'em. Hem, hem, hem; here they are—here they go—all alive:—Aries, or the Ram; Taurus, or the Bull;—and Jimini! here's Gemini himself, or the Twins. Well; the sun he wheels among 'em. Aye, here on the coin he's just crossing the threshold between two of twelve sitting-rooms all in a ring. Book! you lie there; the fact is, you books must know your places. You'll do to give us the bare words and facts, but we come in to supply the thoughts. That's my small experience, so far as the Massachusetts calendar, and Bowditch's navigator, and Daboll's arithmetic go. Signs and wonders, eh? Pity if there is nothing wonderful in signs, and significant in wonders! There's a clue somewhere; wait a bit; hist—hark! By Jove, I have it! Look you, Doubloon, your zodiac here is the life of man in one round chapter; and now I'll read it off, straight out of the book. Come, Almanack! To begin: there's Aries, or the Ram—lecherous dog, he begets us; then, Taurus, or the Bull—he bumps us the first thing; then Gemini, or the Twins—that is, Virtue and Vice; we try to reach Virtue, when lo! comes Cancer the Crab, and drags us back; and here, going from Virtue, Leo, a roaring Lion, lies in the path—he gives a few fierce bites and surly dabs with his paw; we escape, and hail Virgo, the Virgin! that's our first love; we marry and think to be happy for aye, when pop comes Libra, or the Scales—happiness weighed and found wanting; and while we are very sad about that, Lord! how we suddenly jump, as Scorpio, or the Scorpion, stings us in rear; we are curing the wound, when whang come the arrows

8. In Manhattan.
9. Gold coins. Miodores and joes are Portuguese; pistoles are Swiss. Jacob Eckfeldt in *A Manual of Gold and Silver Coins* (1842) explains that these coins and others, including the British pistareen and shilling, circulated in the American colonies and in the states even after the Revolution. Popayan, in Colombia, had a famous mint for making coins.
1. Ruined city in India once famous for wealth and diamonds.
2. Nathaniel Bowditch (1733–1838), in his 1802 navigational treatise usually called by the short title *Epitome*.
3. An almanac. Nathan Daboll's *Complete Schoolmaster's Assistant* (1799) was a widely used arithmetic textbook.
4. Jesus' apostles are said to have performed miracles as "signs and wonders" (e.g., Acts 2.43 and 5.12).

all round; Sagittarius, or the Archer, is amusing himself. As we pluck out the shafts, stand aside! here's the battering-ram, Capricornus, or the Goat; full tilt, he comes rushing, and headlong we are tossed; when Aquarius, or the Water-bearer, pours out his whole deluge and drowns us; and, to wind up, with Pisces, or the Fishes, we sleep. There's a sermon now, writ in high heaven, and the sun goes through it every year, and yet comes out of it all alive and hearty. Jollily he, aloft there, wheels through toil and trouble; and so, alow here, does jolly Stubb. Oh, jolly's the word for aye! Adieu, Doubloon! But stop; here comes little King-Post; dodge round the try-works, now, and let's hear what he'll have to say. There; he's before it; he'll out with something presently. So, so; he's beginning."

"I see nothing here, but a round thing made of gold, and whoever raises a certain whale, this round thing belongs to him. So, what's all this staring been about? It is worth sixteen dollars, that's true; and at two cents the cigar, that's nine hundred and sixty cigars.[5] I wont smoke dirty pipes like Stubb, but I like cigars, and here's nine hundred and sixty of them; so here goes Flask aloft to spy 'em out."

"Shall I call that wise or foolish, now; if it be really wise it has a foolish look to it; yet, if it be really foolish, then has it a sort of wiseish look to it. But, avast; here comes our old Manxman—the old hearse-driver, he must have been, that is, before he took to the sea. He luffs up[6] before the doubloon; halloa, and goes round on the other side of the mast; why, there's a horse-shoe nailed on that side; and now he's back again; what does that mean? Hark! he's muttering—voice like an old worn-out coffee-mill. Prick ears, and listen!"

"If the White Whale be raised, it must be in a month and a day, when the sun stands in some one of these signs. I've studied signs, and know their marks; they were taught me two score years ago, by the old witch in Copenhagen. Now, in what sign will the sun then be? The horse-shoe sign;[7] for there it is, right opposite the gold. And what's the horse-shoe sign? The lion is the horse-shoe sign—the roaring and devouring lion. Ship, old ship! my old head shakes to think of thee."

"There's another rendering now; but still one text. All sorts of men in one kind of world, you see. Dodge again! here comes Queequeg—all tattooing—looks like the signs of the Zodiac himself. What says the Cannibal? As I live he's comparing notes; looking at his thigh bone; thinks the sun is in the thigh, or in the calf, or in the bowels, I suppose, as the old women talk Surgeon's Astronomy[8] in the back country. And by Jove, he's found something there in the vicinity of his thigh—I guess it's Sagittarius, or the Archer. No: he don't know what to make of the doubloon; he takes it for an old button off some king's trowsers. But, aside again! here comes that ghost-devil, Fedallah; tail coiled out of sight as usual, oakum in the toes of his pumps as usual. What does he say, with that look of his? Ah, only makes a sign to the sign and bows himself; there is a sun on the coin—fire worshipper, depend upon it. Ho! more and more. This way comes Pip—poor boy! would he had died, or I; he's half horrible to me. He too has been watching all of these interpreters—myself included—and

5. The arithmetic seems shaky.
6. Pauses.
7. Conventional symbol for the zodiacal Lion.
8. Stubb slurs old backwoods women, imagining them as confusing anatomy and astronomy.

look now, he comes to read, with that unearthly idiot face. Stand away again and hear him. Hark!"

"I look, you look, he looks; we look, ye look, they look."

"Upon my soul, he's been studying Murray's Grammar![9] Improving his mind, poor fellow! But what's that he says now—hist!"

"I look, you look, he looks; we look, ye look, they look."

"Why, he's getting it by heart—hist! again."

"I look, you look, he looks; we look, ye look, they look."

"Well, that's funny."

"And I, you, and he; and we, ye, and they, are all bats; and I'm a crow, especially when I stand a'top of this pine tree here. Caw! caw! caw! caw! caw! caw! Ain't I a crow? And where's the scare-crow? There he stands; two bones stuck into a pair of old trowsers, and two more poked into the sleeves of an old jacket."

"Wonder if he means me?—complimentary!—poor lad!—I could go hang myself. Any way, for the present, I'll quit Pip's vicinity. I can stand the rest, for they have plain wits; but he's too crazy-witty for my sanity. So, so, I leave him muttering."

"Here's the ship's navel, this doubloon here, and they are all on fire to unscrew it. But, unscrew your navel, and what's the consequence?[1] Then again, if it stays here, that is ugly, too, for when aught's nailed to the mast it's a sign that things grow desperate. Ha, ha! old Ahab! the White Whale; he'll nail ye! This is a pine tree. My father, in old Tolland county, cut down a pine tree once, and found a silver ring grown over in it; some old darkey's wedding ring. How did it get there? And so they'll say in the resurrection, when they come to fish up this old mast, and find a doubloon lodged in it, with bedded oysters for the shaggy bark. Oh, the gold! the precious, precious gold!—the green miser[2] 'll hoard ye soon! Hish! hish! God goes 'mong the worlds blackberrying. Cook! ho, cook! and cook us! Jenny! hey, hey, hey, hey, hey, Jenny, Jenny! and get your hoe-cake done!"[3]

CHAPTER 100

LEG AND ARM

THE PEQUOD, OF NANTUCKET,
MEETS THE SAMUEL ENDERBY, OF LONDON.

"Ship, ahoy! Hast seen the White Whale?"

So cried Ahab, once more hailing a ship showing English colors, bearing down under the stern. Trumpet to mouth, the old man was standing in his hoisted quarter-boat, his ivory leg plainly revealed to the stranger captain, who was carelessly reclining in his own boat's bow. He was a darkly-tanned, burly, good-natured, fine-looking man, of sixty or thereabouts, dressed in a spacious roundabout, that hung round him in festoons of blue pilot-cloth; and one empty arm of this jacket streamed behind him like the broidered arm of a huzzar's surcoat.

9. *The English Grammar* (1793) by Lindley Murray (1745–1826) was an elementary school text widely used in the United States.
1. According to folklore, the consequence is that one's rectum falls off.
2. Davy Jones, the keeper of ocean-bottom treasures, as in Ch. 81.
3. From the minstrel song "Old King Crow."

"Hast seen the White Whale?"

"See you this?" and withdrawing it from the folds that had hidden it, he held up a white arm of sperm whale bone, terminating in a wooden head like a mallet.

"Man my boat!" cried Ahab, impetuously, and tossing about the oars near him—"Stand by to lower!"

In less than a minute, without quitting his little craft, he and his crew were dropped to the water, and were soon alongside of the stranger. But here a curious difficulty presented itself. In the excitement of the moment, Ahab had forgotten that since the loss of his leg he had never once stepped on board of any vessel at sea but his own, and then it was always by an ingenious and very handy mechanical contrivance peculiar to the Pequod, and a thing not to be rigged and shipped in any other vessel at a moment's warning. Now, it is no very easy matter for anybody—except those who are almost hourly used to it, like whalemen—to clamber up a ship's side from a boat on the open sea; for the great swells now lift the boat high up towards the bulwarks, and then instantaneously drop it half way down to the kelson. So, deprived of one leg, and the strange ship of course being altogether unsupplied with the kindly invention, Ahab now found himself abjectly reduced to a clumsy landsman again; hopelessly eyeing the uncertain changeful height he could hardly hope to attain.

It has before been hinted, perhaps, that every little untoward circumstance that befel him, and which indirectly sprang from his luckless mishap, almost invariably irritated or exasperated Ahab. And in the present instance, all this was heightened by the sight of the two officers of the strange ship, leaning over the side, by the perpendicular ladder of nailed cleets there, and swinging towards him a pair of tastefully-ornamented man-ropes; for at first they did not seem to bethink them that a one-legged man must be too much of a cripple to use their sea bannisters. But this awkwardness only lasted a minute, because the strange captain, observing at a glance how affairs stood, cried out, "I see, I see!—avast heaving there! Jump, boys, and swing over the cutting-tackle."

As good luck would have it, they had had a whale alongside a day or two previous, and the great tackles were still aloft, and the massive curved blubber-hook, now clean and dry, was still attached to the end. This was quickly lowered to Ahab, who at once comprehending it all, slid his solitary thigh into the curve of the hook (it was like sitting in the fluke of an anchor, or the crotch of an apple tree), and then giving the word, held himself fast, and at the same time also helped to hoist his own weight, by pulling hand-over-hand upon one of the running parts of the tackle. Soon he was carefully swung inside the high bulwarks, and gently landed upon the capstan head. With his ivory arm frankly thrust forth in welcome, the other captain advanced, and Ahab, putting out his ivory leg, and crossing the ivory arm (like two sword-fish blades) cried out in his walrus way, "Aye, aye, hearty! let us shake bones together!—an arm and a leg!—an arm that never can shrink, d'ye see; and a leg that never can run. Where did'st thou see the White Whale?—how long ago?"

"The White Whale," said the Englishman, pointing his ivory arm towards the East, and taking a rueful sight along it, as if it had been a telescope; "There I saw him, on the Line, last season."

"And he took that arm off, did he?" asked Ahab, now sliding down from the capstan, and resting on the Englishman's shoulder, as he did so.

"Aye, he was the cause of it, at least; and that leg, too?"

"Spin me the yarn," said Ahab; "how was it?"

"It was the first time in my life that I ever cruised on the Line," began the Englishman. "I was ignorant of the White Whale at that time. Well, one day we lowered for a pod of four or five whales, and my boat fastened to one of them; a regular circus horse he was, too, that went milling and milling round so, that my boat's crew could only trim dish, by sitting all their sterns on the outer gunwale. Presently up breaches from the bottom of the sea a bouncing great whale, with a milky-white head and hump, all crows' feet and wrinkles."

"It was he, it was he!" cried Ahab, suddenly letting out his suspended breath.

"And harpoons sticking in near his starboard fin."

"Aye, aye—they were mine—*my* irons," cried Ahab, exultingly—"but on!"

"Give me a chance, then," said the Englishman, good-humoredly. "Well, this old great-grandfather, with the white head and hump, runs all afoam into the pod, and goes to snapping furiously at my fast-line."

"Aye, I see!—wanted to part it; free the fast-fish—an old trick—I know him."

"How it was exactly," continued the one-armed commander, "I do not know; but in biting the line, it got foul of his teeth, caught there somehow; but we didn't know it then; so that when we afterwards pulled on the line, bounce we came plump on to his hump! instead of the other whale's that went off to windward, all fluking. Seeing how matters stood, and what a noble great whale it was—the noblest and biggest I ever saw, sir, in my life—I resolved to capture him, spite of the boiling rage he seemed to be in. And thinking the hap-hazard line would get loose, or the tooth it was tangled to might draw (for I have a devil of a boat's crew for a pull on a whale-line); seeing all this, I say, I jumped into my first mate's boat—Mr. Mounttop's here (by the way, Captain—Mounttop; Mounttop—the captain);—as I was saying, I jumped into Mounttop's boat, which, d'ye see, was gunwale and gunwale with mine, then; and snatching the first harpoon, let this old great-grandfather have it. But, Lord, look you, sir—hearts and souls alive, man—the next instant, in a jiff, I was blind as a bat—both eyes out—all befogged and bedeadened with black foam—the whale's tail looming straight up out of it, perpendicular in the air, like a marble steeple. No use sterning all, then; but as I was groping at midday, with a blinding sun, all crown-jewels; as I was groping, I say, after the second iron, to toss it overboard—down comes the tail like a Lima tower, cutting my boat in two, leaving each half in splinters; and, flukes first, the white hump backed through the wreck, as though it was all chips. We all struck out. To escape his terrible flailings, I seized hold of my harpoon pole sticking in him, and for a moment clung to that like a sucking fish. But a combing sea dashed me off, and at the same instant, the fish, taking one good dart forwards, went down like a flash; and the barb of that cursed second iron towing along near me caught me here" (clapping his hand just below his shoulder); "yes, caught me just here, I say, and bore me down to Hell's flames, I was thinking; when, when, all of a sudden, thank the good God, the barb ript its way along the flesh—clear along the whole length of my arm—came out nigh my wrist, and up I floated;—and that gentleman there will tell you the rest (by the way, captain—Dr. Bunger, ship's surgeon: Bunger, my lad,—the captain). Now, Bunger boy, spin your part of the yarn."

The professional gentleman thus familiarly pointed out, had been all the time standing near them, with nothing specific visible, to denote his gentlemanly rank on board. His face was an exceedingly round but sober one; he was dressed in a faded blue woollen frock or shirt, and patched trowsers; and had thus far been dividing his attention between a marlingspike he held in one hand, and a pill-box held in the other, occasionally casting a critical glance at the ivory limbs of the two crippled captains. But, at his superior's introduction of him to Ahab, he politely bowed, and straightway went on to do his captain's bidding.

"It was a shocking bad wound," began the whale-surgeon; "and, taking my advice, Captain Boomer here, stood our old Sammy—"

"Samuel Enderby is the name of my ship," interrupted the one-armed captain, addressing Ahab; "go on, boy."

"Stood our old Sammy off to the northward, to get out of the blazing hot weather there on the Line. But it was no use—I did all I could; sat up with him nights; was very severe with him in the matter of diet—"

"Oh, very severe!" chimed in the patient himself; then suddenly altering his voice, "Drinking hot rum toddies with me every night, till he couldn't see to put on the bandages; and sending me to bed, half seas over, about three o'clock in the morning. Oh, ye stars! he sat up with me indeed, and was very severe in my diet. Oh! a great watcher, and very dietetically severe, is Dr. Bunger.[1] (Bunger, you dog, laugh out! why don't ye? You know you're a precious jolly rascal.) But, heave ahead, boy, I'd rather be killed by you than kept alive by any other man."

"My captain, you must have ere this perceived, respected sir"—said the imperturbable godly-looking Bunger, slightly bowing to Ahab—"is apt to be facetious at times; he spins us many clever things of that sort. But I may as well say—en passant, as the French remark—that I myself—that is to say, Jack Bunger, late of the reverend clergy—am a strict total abstinence man; I never drink—"

"Water!" cried the captain; "he never drinks it; it's a sort of fits to him; fresh water throws him into the hydrophobia;[2] but go on—go on with the arm story."

"Yes, I may as well," said the surgeon, coolly. "I was about observing, sir, before Captain Boomer's facetious interruption, that spite of my best and severest endeavors, the wound kept getting worse and worse; the truth was, sir, it was as ugly gaping wound as surgeon ever saw; more than two feet and several inches long. I measured it with the lead line. In short, it grew black; I knew what was threatened, and off it came. But I had no hand in shipping that ivory arm there; that thing is against all rule"—pointing at it with the marlingspike—"that is the captain's work, not mine; he ordered the carpenter to make it; he had that club-hammer there put to the end, to knock some one's brains out with, I suppose, as he tried mine once. He flies into diabolical passions sometimes. Do ye see this dent, sir"—removing his hat, and brushing aside his hair, and exposing a bowl-like cavity in his skull, but which bore not the slightest scarry trace, or any token of ever having been a wound—"Well, the captain there will tell you how that came here; he knows."

1. One who puts the bung (plug) into a cask of liquid, or (the case here) who pulls it out. The name signals the unreliability of the surgeon's claim to be a total abstinence man.
2. A morbid dread of water, as in rabies. The captain's point is that the surgeon is not a water drinker.

"No, I don't," said the captain, "but his mother did; he was born with it. Oh, you solemn rogue, you—you Bunger! was there ever such another Bunger in the watery world? Bunger, when you die, you ought to die in pickle, you dog; you should be preserved to future ages, you rascal."

"What became of the White Whale?" now cried Ahab, who thus far had been impatiently listening to this bye-play between the two Englishmen.

"Oh!" cried the one-armed captain, "Oh, yes! Well; after he sounded, we didn't see him again for some time; in fact, as I before hinted, I didn't then know what whale it was that had served me such a trick, till some time afterwards, when coming back to the Line, we heard about Moby Dick—as some call him—and then I knew it was he."

"Did'st thou cross his wake again?"

"Twice."

"But could not fasten?"

"Didn't want to try to: ain't one limb enough? What should I do without this other arm? And I'm thinking Moby Dick doesn't bite so much as he swallows."

"Well, then," interrupted Bunger, "give him your left arm for bait to get the right. Do you know, gentlemen"—very gravely and mathematically bowing to each Captain in succession—"Do you know, gentlemen, that the digestive organs of the whale are so inscrutably constructed by Divine Providence, that it is quite impossible for him to completely digest even a man's arm? And he knows it too. So that what you take for the White Whale's malice is only his awkwardness. For he never means to swallow a single limb; he only thinks to terrify by feints. But sometimes he is like the old juggling fellow, formerly a patient of mine in Ceylon, that making believe swallow jack-knives, once upon a time let one drop into him in good earnest, and there it stayed for a twelve-month or more; when I gave him an emetic, and he heaved it up in small tacks,[3] d'ye see. No possible way for him to digest that jack-knife, and fully incorporate it into his general bodily system. Yes, Captain Boomer, if you are quick enough about it, and have a mind to pawn one arm for the sake of the privilege of giving decent burial to the other, why in that case the arm is yours; only let the whale have another chance at you shortly, that's all."

"No, thank ye, Bunger," said the English Captain, "he's welcome to the arm he has, since I can't help it, and didn't know him then; but not to another one. No more White Whales for me; I've lowered for him once, and that has satisfied me. There would be great glory in killing him, I know that; and there is a shipload of precious sperm in him, but, hark ye, he's best let alone; don't you think so, Captain?"—glancing at the ivory leg.

"He is. But he will still be hunted, for all that. What is best let alone, that accursed thing is not always what least allures. He's all a magnet! How long since thou saw'st him last? Which way heading?"

"Bless my soul, and curse the foul fiend's," cried Bunger, stoopingly walking round Ahab, and like a dog, strangely snuffing; "this man's blood—bring the thermometer!—it's at the boiling point!—his pulse makes these planks beat!—sir!"—taking a lancet from his pocket, and drawing near to Ahab's arm.

3. More tall-tale humor, akin to that in Ch. 14; here, the intricately timed comedic byplay of the mutually admiring pair of put-on artists enrages Ahab, who conspicuously lacks a sense of humor.

"Avast!" roared Ahab, dashing him against the bulwarks—"Man the boat! Which way heading?"

"Good God!" cried the English Captain, to whom the question was put. "What's the matter? He was heading east, I think.—Is your Captain crazy?" whispering Fedallah.[4]

But Fedallah, putting a finger on his lip, slid over the bulwarks to take the boat's steering oar, and Ahab, swinging the cutting-tackle towards him, commanded the ship's sailors to stand by to lower.

In a moment he was standing in the boat's stern, and the Manilla men were springing to their oars. In vain the English Captain hailed him. With back to the stranger ship, and face set like a flint to his own, Ahab stood upright till alongside of the Pequod.

CHAPTER 101

THE DECANTER

Ere the English ship fades from sight, be it set down here, that she hailed from London, and was named after the late Samuel Enderby, merchant of that city, the original of the famous whaling house of Enderby & Sons;[1] a house which in my poor whale man's opinion, comes not far behind the united royal houses of the Tudors and Bourbons, in point of real historical interest. How long prior to the year of our Lord 1775, this great whaling house was in existence, my numerous fish-documents do not make plain; but in that year (1775) it fitted out the first English ships that ever regularly hunted the Sperm Whale; though for some score of years previous (ever since 1726) our valiant Coffins and Maceys of Nantucket and the Vineyard had in large fleets pursued that Leviathan, but only in the North and South Atlantic: not elsewhere. Be it distinctly recorded here, that the Nantucketers were the first among mankind to harpoon with civilized steel the great Sperm Whale; and that for half a century they were the only people of the whole globe who so harpooned him.

In 1788, a fine ship, the Amelia, fitted out for the express purpose, and at the sole charge of the vigorous Enderbys, boldly rounded Cape Horn, and was the first among the nations to lower a whale-boat of any sort in the great South Sea. The voyage was a skilful and lucky one; and returning to her berth with her hold full of the precious sperm, the Amelia's example was soon followed by other ships, English and American, and thus the vast Sperm Whale grounds of the Pacific were thrown open. But not content with this good deed, the indefatigable house again bestirred itself. Samuel and all his Sons—how many, their mother only knows[2]—and under their immediate auspices, and partly, I think, at their expense, the British government was induced to send the sloop-of-war Rattler on a whaling voyage of discovery into the South Sea. Commanded by a naval Post-Captain, the Rattler made a rattling voyage of it, and did some service;

4. I.e., whispering *to* Fedallah—not the likeliest crew member to chat up so casually.
1. Melville learned about the Enderby family in Beale (Mansfield and Vincent, p. 807).
2. As example of the book's offhand humor, like the pun just below on *Rattler*, and the one farther down on "flip," a spicy mixture of beer or other alcoholic beverage beaten together with egg. Even amid the comedy is a submerged verbal echo of *Othello* 5.2.339, where the Moor recalls having done the state "some service," as the *Rattler* did.

how much does not appear. But this is not all. In 1819, the same house fitted out a discovery whale ship of their own, to go on a testing cruise to the remote waters of Japan. That ship—well called the "Syren"—made a noble experimental cruise; and it was thus that the great Japanese Whaling Ground first became generally known. The Syren in this famous voyage was commanded by a Captain Coffin, a Nantucketer.

All honor to the Enderbies, therefore, whose house, I think, exists to the present day; though doubtless the original Samuel must long ago have slipped his cable for the great South Sea of the other world.

The ship named after him was worthy of the honor, being a very fast sailer and a noble craft every way. I boarded her once at midnight somewhere off the Patagonian coast,[3] and drank good flip down in the forecastle. It was a fine gam we had, and they were all trumps—every soul on board. A short life to them, and a jolly death.[4] And that fine gam I had—long, very long after old Ahab touched her planks with his ivory heel—it minds me of the noble, solid, Saxon hospitality of that ship; and may my parson forget me, and the devil remember me, if I ever lose sight of it. Flip? Did I say we had flip? Yes, and we flipped it at the rate of ten gallons the hour; and when the squall came (for it's squally off there by Patagonia), and all hands—visitors and all—were called to reef topsails, we were so top-heavy that we had to swing each other aloft in bowlines; and we ignorantly furled the skirts of our jackets into the sails, so that we hung there, reefed fast in the howling gale, a warning example to all drunken tars. However, the masts did not go overboard; and by and bye we scrambled down, so sober, that we had to pass the flip again, though the savage salt spray bursting down the forecastle scuttle, rather too much diluted and pickled it to my taste.

The beef was fine—tough, but with body in it. They said it was bull-beef; others, that it was dromedary beef; but I do not know, for certain, how that was. They had dumplings too; small, but substantial, symmetrically globular, and indestructible dumplings. I fancied that you could feel them, and roll them about in you after they were swallowed. If you stooped over too far forward, you risked their pitching out of you like billiard-balls. The bread—but that couldn't be helped; besides, it was an anti-scorbutic; in short, the bread contained the only fresh fare they had. But the forecastle was not very light, and it was very easy to step over into a dark corner when you ate it. But all in all, taking her from truck to helm, considering the dimensions of the cook's boilers, including his own live parchment boilers; fore and aft, I say, the Samuel Enderby was a jolly ship; of good fare and plenty; fine flip and strong; crack fellows all, and capital from boot heels to hat-band.

But why was it, think ye, that the Samuel Enderby, and some other English whalers I know of—not all though—were such famous, hospitable ships; that passed round the beef, and the bread, and the can, and the joke; and were not soon weary of eating, and drinking, and laughing? I will tell you. The abounding good cheer of these English whalers is matter for historical research. Nor have I been at all sparing of historical whale research, when it has seemed needed.

3. In the extremely dangerous waters at the southern tip of South America, a highly unlikely place for such a cheerful gam—and the tallest of Ishamael's tall tales. See pp. 20 and 148–49.
4. Recalling his conviviality, Ishamel varies the drunkard's motto ("A short life and a merry one") to something more recklessly nihilistic, like a pirate's toast.

The English were preceded in the whale fishery by the Hollanders, Zealanders, and Danes; from whom they derived many terms still extant in the fishery; and what is yet more, their fat old fashions, touching plenty to eat and drink. For, as a general thing, the English merchant-ship scrimps her crew; but not so the English whaler. Hence, in the English, this thing of whaling good cheer is not normal and natural, but incidental and particular; and, therefore, must have some special origin, which is here pointed out, and will be still further elucidated.

During my researches in the Leviathanic histories, I stumbled upon an ancient Dutch volume,[5] which, by the musty whaling smell of it, I knew must be about whalers. The title was, "Dan Coopman," wherefore I concluded that this must be the invaluable memoirs of some Amsterdam cooper in the fishery, as every whale ship must carry its cooper. I was reinforced in this opinion by seeing that it was the production of one "Fitz Swackhammer." But my friend Dr. Snodhead, a very learned man, professor of Low Dutch and High German in the college of Santa Claus and St. Pott's, to whom I handed the work for translation, giving him a box of sperm candles for his trouble—this same Dr. Snodhead, so soon as he spied the book, assured me that "Dan Coopman" did not mean "The Cooper," but "The Merchant." In short, this ancient and learned Low Dutch book treated of the commerce of Holland; and, among other subjects, contained a very interesting account of its whale fishery. And in this chapter it was, headed "Smeer," or "Fat," that I found a long detailed list of the outfits for the larders and cellars of 180 sail of Dutch whalemen; from which list, as translated by Dr. Snodhead, I transcribe the following:

400,000	lbs. of beef.
60,000	lbs. Friesland pork.
150,000	lbs. of stock fish.
550,000	lbs. of biscuit.
72,000	lbs. of soft bread.
2,800	firkins of butter.
20,000	lbs. Texel & Leyden cheese.
144,000	lbs. cheese (probably an inferior article).
550	ankers of Geneva.
10,800	barrels of beer.

Most statistical tables are parchingly dry in the reading; not so in the present case, however, where the reader is flooded with whole pipes, barrels, quarts, and gills of good gin and good cheer.

At the time, I devoted three days to the studious digesting of all this beer, beef, and bread, during which many profound thoughts were incidentally suggested to me, capable of a transcendental and Platonic application; and, furthermore, I compiled supplementary tables of my own, touching the probable quantity of stock-fish, &c., consumed by every Low Dutch harpooneer in that ancient Greenland and Spitzbergen whale fishery. In the first place, the amount of butter, and Texel and Leyden cheese consumed, seems amazing. I impute it, though, to their naturally unctuous natures, being rendered still more unctuous by the nature of their

5. "This long passage with all its statistics was Melville's parody of a similar one" in Scoresby (Mansfield and Vincent, p. 807).

vocation, and especially by their pursuing their game in those frigid Polar Seas, on the very coasts of that Esquimaux country where the convivial natives pledge each other in bumpers of train oil.

The quantity of beer, too, is very large, 10,800 barrels. Now, as those polar fisheries could only be prosecuted in the short summer of that climate, so that the whole cruise of one of these Dutch whalemen, including the short voyage to and from the Spitzbergen sea, did not much exceed three months, say, and reckoning 30 men to each of their fleet of 180 sail, we have 5,400 Low Dutch seamen in all; therefore, I say, we have precisely two barrels of beer per man, for a twelve weeks' allowance, exclusive of his fair proportion of that 550 ankers of gin. Now, whether these gin and beer harpooneers, so fuddled as one might fancy them to have been, were the right sort of men to stand up in a boat's head, and take good aim at flying whales; this would seem somewhat improbable. Yet they did aim at them, and hit them too. But this was very far North, be it remembered, where beer agrees well with the constitution; upon the Equator, in our southern fishery, beer would be apt to make the harpooneer sleepy at the mast-head and boozy in his boat; and grievous loss might ensue to Nantucket and New Bedford.

But no more; enough has been said to show that the old Dutch whalers of two or three centuries ago were high livers; and that the English whalers have not neglected so excellent an example. For, say they, when cruising in an empty ship, if you can get nothing better out of the world, get a good dinner out of it, at least. And this empties the decanter.

CHAPTER 102

A BOWER IN THE ARSACIDES[1]

Hitherto, in descriptively treating of the Sperm Whale, I have chiefly dwelt upon the marvels of his outer aspect; or separately and in detail upon some few interior structural features. But to a large and thorough sweeping comprehension of him, it behoves me now to unbutton him still further, and untrussing the points[2] of his hose, unbuckling his garters, and casting loose the hooks and the eyes of the joints of his innermost bones, set him before you in his ultimatum; that is to say, in his unconditional skeleton.

But how now, Ishmael? How is it, that you, a mere oarsman in the fishery, pretend to know aught about the subterranean parts of the whale? Did erudite Stubb, mounted upon your capstan, deliver lectures on the anatomy of the Cetacea; and by help of the windlass, hold up a specimen rib for exhibition? Explain thyself, Ishmael. Can you land a full-grown whale on your deck for examination, as a cook dishes a roast-pig? Surely not. A veritable witness have you hitherto been, Ishmael; but have a care

1. Islands south of the Solomon group in Melanesia, northeast of Australia.
2. The English edition's "untrussing" is adopted over the American Harper edition's "untagging" (both mean "dropping trousers") because Melville probably had in mind the vulgar description of Claudio's impregnating Juliet in Shakespeare's *Measure for Measure* 3.2.169. Melville's brother Gansevoort, who died tragically in London in 1846 after arranging the publication of *Typee*, left in his hand a copy of Claudio's speech beginning "Ay, but to die and go we know not where; To lie in cold obstruction and to rot" (3.1).

how you seize the privilege of Jonah alone; the privilege of discoursing upon the joists and beams; the rafters, ridge-pole, sleepers, and underpinnings, making up the frame-work of leviathan; and belike of the tallow-vats, dairy-rooms, butteries, and cheeseries in his bowels.

I confess, that since Jonah, few whalemen have penetrated very far beneath the skin of the adult whale; nevertheless, I have been blessed with an opportunity to dissect him in miniature. In a ship I belonged to, a small cub Sperm Whale was once bodily hoisted to the deck for his poke or bag, to make sheaths for the barbs of the harpoons, and for the heads of the lances. Think you I let that chance go, without using my boat-hatchet and jack-knife, and breaking the seal and reading all the contents of that young cub?

And as for my exact knowledge of the bones of the leviathan in their gigantic, full grown development, for that rare knowledge I am indebted to my late royal friend Tranquo, king of Tranque, one of the Arsacides. For being at Tranque, years ago, when attached to the trading-ship Dey of Algiers, I was invited to spend part of the Arsacidean holidays with the lord of Tranque, at his retired palm villa at Pupella; a sea-side glen not very far distant from what our sailors called Bamboo-Town, his capital.

Among many other fine qualities, my royal friend Tranquo, being gifted with a devout love for all matters of barbaric vertù,[3] had brought together in Pupella whatever rare things the more ingenious of his people could invent; chiefly carved woods of wonderful devices, chiselled shells, inlaid spears, costly paddles, aromatic canoes; and all these distributed among whatever natural wonders, the wonder-freighted, tribute-rendering waves had cast upon his shores.

Chief among these latter was a great Sperm Whale, which, after an unusually long raging gale, had been found dead and stranded, with his head against a cocoa-nut tree, whose plumage-like, tufted droopings seemed his verdant jet. When the vast body had at last been stripped of its fathom-deep enfoldings, and the bones become dust dry in the sun, then the skeleton was carefully transported up the Pupella glen, where a grand temple of lordly palms now sheltered it.

The ribs were hung with trophies; the vertebræ were carved with Arsacidean annals, in strange hieroglyphics; in the skull, the priests kept up an unextinguished aromatic flame, so that the mystic head again sent forth its vapory spout; while, suspended from a bough, the terrific lower jaw vibrated over all the devotees, like the hair-hung sword that so affrighted Damocles.[4]

It was a wondrous sight. The wood was green as mosses of the Icy Glen;[5] the trees stood high and haughty, feeling their living sap; the industrious earth beneath was as a weaver's loom, with a gorgeous carpet on it, whereof the ground-vine tendrils formed the warp and woof, and the living flowers the figures. All the trees, with all their laden branches; all the shrubs, and ferns, and grasses; the message-carrying air; all these unceasingly were active. Through the lacings of the leaves, the great sun seemed a

3. Curios and antiques, or any strange and rare objects of art.
4. A Syracusian courtier of the 4th century B.C.E. A naked sword was said to have been suspended by a single hair over his head.
5. Near Stockbridge, Massachusetts, not far from Melville's farmhouse, Arrowhead, south of Pittsfield, where he wrote much of *Moby-Dick*.

flying shuttle weaving the unwearied verdure. Oh, busy weaver! unseen weaver!—pause!—one word!—whither flows the fabric? what palace may it deck? wherefore all these ceaseless toilings? Speak, weaver!—stay thy hand!—but one single word with thee! Nay—the shuttle flies—the figures float from forth the loom; the freshet-rushing carpet for ever slides away. The weaver-god, he weaves; and by that weaving is he deafened, that he hears no mortal voice; and by that humming, we, too, who look on the loom are deafened; and only when we escape it shall we hear the thousand voices that speak through it. For even so it is in all material factories. The spoken words that are inaudible among the flying spindles; those same words are plainly heard without the walls, bursting from the opened casements. Thereby have villanies been detected. Ah, mortal! then, be heedful; for so, in all this din of the great world's loom, thy subtlest thinkings may be overheard afar.

Now, amid the green, life-restless loom of that Arsacidean wood, the great, white, worshipped skeleton lay lounging—a gigantic idler! Yet, as the ever-woven verdant warp and woof intermixed and hummed around him, the mightly idler seemed the cunning weaver; himself all woven over with the vines; every month assuming greener, fresher verdure; but himself a skeleton. Life folded Death; Death trellised Life; the grim god wived with youthful Life, and begat him curly-headed glories.

Now, when with royal Tranquo I visited this wondrous whale, and saw the skull an altar, and the artificial smoke ascending from where the real jet had issued, I marvelled that the king should regard a chapel as an object of vertù. He laughed. But more I marvelled that the priests should swear that smoky jet of his was genuine. To and fro I paced before this skeleton—brushed the vines aside—broke through the ribs—and with a ball of Arsacidean twine,[6] wandered, eddied long amid its many winding, shaded colonnades and arbors. But soon my line was out; and following it back, I emerged from the opening where I entered. I saw no living thing within; naught was there but bones.

Cutting me a green measuring-rod, I once more dived within the skeleton. From their arrow-slit in the skull, the priests perceived me taking the altitude of the final rib. "How now!" they shouted; "Dar'st thou measure this our god! That's for us." "Aye, priests—well, how long do ye make him, then?" But hereupon a fierce contest rose among them, concerning feet and inches; they cracked each other's sconces with their yard-sticks—the great skull echoed—and seizing that lucky chance, I quickly concluded my own admeasurements.

These admeasurements I now propose to set before you. But first, be it recorded, that, in this matter, I am not free to utter any fancied measurement I please. Because there are skeleton authorities you can refer to, to test my accuracy. There is a Leviathanic Museum, they tell me, in Hull, England, one of the whaling ports of that country, where they have some fine specimens of fin-backs and other whales. Likewise, I have heard that in the museum of Manchester, in New Hampshire, they have what the proprietors call "the only perfect specimen of a Greenland or River Whale in the United States." Moreover, at a place in Yorkshire, England, Burton

6. A recollection of the way Theseus found his way back out of the Cretan labyrinth (by his trail of twine) after killing the part man, part bull Minotaur.

Constable by name, a certain Sir Clifford Constable has in his possession the skeleton of a Sperm Whale,[7] but of moderate size, by no means of the full-grown magnitude of my friend King Tranquo's.

In both cases, the stranded whales to which these two skeletons belonged, were originally claimed by their proprietors upon similar grounds. King Tranquo seizing his because he wanted it; and Sir Clifford, because he was lord of the seignories of those parts. Sir Clifford's whale has been articulated throughout; so that, like a great chest of drawers, you can open and shut him, in all his bony cavities—spread out his ribs like a gigantic fan—and swing all day upon his lower jaw. Locks are to be put upon some of his trapdoors and shutters; and a footman will show round future visitors with a bunch of keys at his side. Sir Clifford thinks of charging twopence for a peep at the whispering gallery[8] in the spinal column; threepence to hear the echo in the hollow of his cerebellum; and sixpence for the unrivalled view from his forehead.

The skeleton dimensions I shall now proceed to set down are copied verbatim from my right arm, where I had them tattooed; as in my wild wanderings at that period, there was no other secure way of preserving such valuable statistics. But as I was crowded for space, and wished the other parts of my body to remain a blank page for a poem I was then composing—at least, what untattooed parts might remain—I did not trouble myself with the odd inches; nor, indeed, should inches at all enter into a congenial admeasurement of the whale.

CHAPTER 103

MEASUREMENT OF THE WHALE'S SKELETON

In the first place, I wish to lay before you a particular, plain statement, touching the living bulk of this leviathan, whose skeleton we are briefly to exhibit. Such a statement may prove useful here.

According to a careful calculation I have made, and which I partly base upon Captain Scoresby's estimate, of seventy tons for the largest sized Greenland whale of sixty feet in length; according to my careful calculation, I say, a Sperm Whale of the largest magnitude, between eighty-five and ninety feet in length, and something less than forty feet in its fullest circumference, such a whale will weigh at least ninety tons; so that, reckoning thirteen men to a ton, he would considerably outweigh the combined population of a whole village of one thousand one hundred inhabitants.

Think you not then that brains, like yoked cattle, should be put to this leviathan, to make him at all budge to any landsman's imagination?

Having already in various ways put before you his skull, spout-hole, jaw, teeth, tail, forehead, fins, and divers other parts, I shall now simply point out what is most interesting in the general bulk of his unobstructed bones. But as the colossal skull embraces so very large a proportion of the entire extent of the skeleton; as it is by far the most complicated part; and as nothing is to be repeated concerning it in this chapter, you must not fail to carry

7. Remnants of this whale are still shown in the great barn of this country house (near Hull).
8. Melville's invention, based on the acoustic peculiarities of St. Paul's Cathedral in London and other great architectural wonders.

it in your mind, or under your arm, as we proceed, otherwise you will not gain a complete notion of the general structure we are about to view.

In length, the Sperm Whale's skeleton at Tranque measured seventy-two feet; so that when fully invested and extended in life, he must have been ninety feet long; for in the whale, the skeleton loses about one fifth in length compared with the living body. Of this seventy-two feet, his skull and jaw comprised some twenty feet, leaving some fifty feet of plain back-bone. Attached to this back-bone, for something less than a third of its length, was the mighty circular basket of ribs which once enclosed his vitals.

To me this vast ivory-ribbed chest, with the long, unrelieved spine, extending far away from it in a straight line, not a little resembled the embryo hull of a great ship new-laid upon the stocks, when only some twenty of her naked bow-ribs are inserted, and the keel is otherwise, for the time, but a long, disconnected timber.

The ribs were ten on a side. The first, to begin from the neck, was nearly six feet long; the second, third, and fourth were each successively longer, till you came to the climax of the fifth, or one of the middle ribs, which measured eight feet and some inches. From that part, the remaining ribs diminished, till the tenth and last only spanned five feet and some inches. In general thickness, they all bore a seemly correspondence to their length. The middle ribs were the most arched. In some of the Arsacides they are used for beams whereon to lay foot-path bridges over small streams.

In considering these ribs, I could not but be struck anew with the circumstance, so variously repeated in this book, that the skeleton of the whale is by no means the mould of his invested form. The largest of the Tranque ribs, one of the middle ones, occupied that part of the fish which, in life, is greatest in depth. Now, the greatest depth of the invested body of this particular whale must have been at least sixteen feet; whereas, the corresponding rib measured but little more than eight feet. So that this rib only conveyed half of the true notion of the living magnitude of that part. Besides, for some way, where I now saw but a naked spine, all that had been once wrapped round with tons of added bulk in flesh, muscle, blood, and bowels. Still more, for the ample fins, I here saw but a few disordered joints; and in place of the weighty and majestic, but boneless flukes, an utter blank!

How vain and foolish, then, thought I, for timid untravelled man to try to comprehend aright this wondrous whale, by merely poring over his dead attenuated skeleton, stretched in this peaceful wood. No. Only in the heart of quickest perils; only when within the eddyings of his angry flukes; only on the profound unbounded sea, can the fully invested whale be truly and livingly found out.

But the spine. For that, the best way we can consider it is, with a crane, to pile its bones high up on end. No speedy enterprise. But now it's done, it looks much like Pompey's Pillar.

There are forty and odd vertebræ in all, which in the skeleton are not locked together. They mostly lie like the great knobbed blocks on a Gothic spire, forming solid courses of heavy masonry. The largest, a middle one, is in width something less than three feet, and in depth more than four. The smallest, where the spine tapers away into the tail, is only two inches in width, and looks something like a white billiard-ball. I was told that there were still smaller ones, but they had been lost by some little cannibal urchins, the priest's children, who had stolen them to play marbles

with. Thus we see how that the spine of even the hugest of living things tapers off at last into simple child's play.

CHAPTER 104

THE FOSSIL WHALE[1]

From his mighty bulk the whale affords a most congenial theme whereon to enlarge, amplify, and generally expatiate. Would you, you could not compress him. By good rights he should only be treated of in imperial folio.[2] Not to tell over again his furlongs from spiracle to tail, and the yards he measures about the waist; only think of the gigantic involutions of his intestines, where they lie in him like great cables and hausers coiled away in the subterranean orlop-deck of a line-of-battle-ship.

Since I have undertaken to manhandle this Leviathan, it behoves me to approve myself omnisciently exhaustive in the enterprise; not overlooking the minutest seminal germs of his blood, and spinning him out to the uttermost coil of his bowels. Having already described him in most of his present habitatory and anatomical peculiarities, it now remains to magnify him in an archæological, fossiliferous, and antediluvian point of view. Applied to any other creature than the Leviathan—to an ant or a flea—such portly terms might justly be deemed unwarrantably grandiloquent. But when Leviathan is the text, the case is altered. Fain am I to stagger to this emprise under the weightiest words of the dictionary. And here be it said, that whenever it has been convenient to consult one in the course of these dissertations, I have invariably used a huge quarto edition of Johnson,[3] expressly purchased for that purpose; because that famous lexicographer's uncommon personal bulk more fitted him to compile a lexicon to be used by a whale author like me.

One often hears of writers that rise and swell with their subject, though it may seem but an ordinary one. How, then, with me, writing of this Leviathan? Unconsciously my chirography expands into placard capitals. Give me a condor's quill! Give me Vesuvius' crater for an inkstand! Friends, hold my arms! For in the mere act of penning my thoughts of this Leviathan, they weary me, and make me faint with their outreaching comprehensiveness of sweep, as if to include the whole circle of the sciences, and all the generations of whales, and men, and mastodons, past, present, and to come, with all the revolving panoramas of empire on earth, and throughout the whole universe, not excluding its suburbs. Such, and so magnifying, is the virtue of a large and liberal theme! We expand to its bulk. To produce a mighty book, you must choose a mighty theme. No great and enduring volume can ever be written on the flea, though many there be who have tried it.

Ere entering upon the subject of Fossil Whales, I present my credentials as a geologist, by stating that in my miscellaneous time I have been

1. In this chapter, Melville used information from the article on "Whales" in the *Penny Cyclopædia*.
2. A very large volume made from printers' paper folded only once.
3. Melville's reference is to Dr. Samuel Johnson's *Dictionary of the English Language* "Quarto edition": a volume made from printers' paper folded twice. This may be a slip for *folio*; the first (1755) edition was in folio. See "imperial folio," in the previous paragraph, and Ch. 32.

a stone-mason, and also a great digger of ditches, canals and wells, wine-vaults, cellars, and cisterns of all sorts. Likewise, by way of preliminary, I desire to remind the reader, that while in the earlier geological strata there are found the fossils of monsters now almost[4] completely extinct; the subsequent relics discovered in what are called the Tertiary formations seem the connecting, or at any rate intercepted links, between the ante-chronical creatures, and those whose remote posterity are said to have entered the Ark; all the Fossil Whales hitherto discovered belong to the Tertiary period, which is the last preceding the superficial formations. And though none of them precisely answer to any known species of the present time, they are yet sufficiently akin to them in general respects, to justify their taking rank as Cetacean fossils.

Detached broken fossils of pre-adamite[5] whales, fragments of their bones and skeletons, have within thirty years past, at various intervals, been found at the base of the Alps, in Lombardy, in France, in England, in Scotland, and in the States of Louisiana, Mississippi, and Alabama. Among the more curious of such remains is part of a skull, which in the year 1779 was disinterred in the Rue Dauphiné in Paris, a short street opening almost directly upon the palace of the Tuileries; and bones disinterred in excavating the great docks of Antwerp, in Napoleon's time. Cuvier pronounced these fragments to have belonged to some utterly unknown Leviathanic species.

But by far the most wonderful of all cetacean relics was the almost complete vast skeleton of an extinct monster, found in the year 1842, on the plantation of Judge Creagh, in Alabama. The awe-stricken credulous slaves in the vicinity took it for the bones of one of the fallen angels. The Alabama doctors declared it a huge reptile, and bestowed upon it the name of Basilosaurus. But some specimen bones of it being taken across the sea to Owen,[6] the English Anatomist, it turned out that this alleged reptile was a whale, though of a departed species. A significant illustration of the fact, again and again repeated in this book, that the skeleton of the whale furnishes but little clue to the shape of his fully invested body. So Owen re-christened the monster Zeuglodon; and in his paper read before the London Geological Society, pronounced it, in substance, one of the most extraordinary creatures which the mutations[7] of the globe have blotted out of existence.

When I stand among these mighty Leviathan skeletons, skulls, tusks, jaws, ribs, and vertebræ, all characterized by partial resemblances to the existing breeds of sea-monsters; but at the same time bearing on the other hand similar affinities to the annihilated ante-chronical Leviathans,[8] their incalculable seniors; I am, by a flood, borne back to that wondrous period, ere time itself can be said to have begun; for time began with man. Here Saturn's[9] grey chaos rolls over me, and I obtain dim, shuddering glimpses into those Polar eternities; when wedged bastions of ice pressed hard upon

4. "Almost" seems excessively cautious in the light of terms like "annihilated" below.
5. Prehistoric, before the creation of Adam.
6. Richard Owen (1804–1892), English anatomist and later the founder of the Natural History Museum in South Kensington.
7. Possibly a misreading of Melville's hand because the word in the *Penny Cyclopædia*, his source, is *revolution*: "which the revolutions of the globe have blotted out of the number of existing things."
8. Creatures existing before man was created (according to Genesis).
9. Chief of the Titans, the pre-Olympian gods of Roman mythology.

what are now the Tropics; and in all the 25,000 miles of this world's circumference, not an inhabitable hand's breadth of land was visible. Then the whole world was the whale's; and, king of creation, he left his wake along the present lines of the Andes and the Himmalehs. Who can show a pedigree like Leviathan? Ahab's harpoon had shed older blood than the Pharaohs'. Methuselah[1] seems a schoolboy. I look round to shake hands with Shem.[2] I am horror-struck at this antemosaic, unsourced existence of the unspeakable terrors of the whale, which, having been before all time, must needs exist after all humane ages are over.

But not alone has this Leviathan left his pre-adamite traces in the stereotype plates of nature, and in limestone and marl bequeathed his ancient bust; but upon Egyptian tablets, whose antiquity seems to claim for them an almost fossiliferous character, we find the unmistakable print of his fin. In an apartment of the great temple of Denderah, some fifty years ago, there was discovered upon the granite ceiling a sculptured and painted planisphere,[3] abounding in centaurs, griffins and dolphins, similar to the grotesque figures on the celestial globe of the moderns. Gliding among them, old Leviathan swam as of yore; was there swimming in that planisphere, centuries before Solomon was cradled.

Nor must there be omitted another strange attestation of the antiquity of the whale, in his own osseous post-diluvian reality, as set down by the venerable John Leo,[4] the old Barbary traveller.

"Not far from the Sea-side, they have a Temple, the Rafters and Beams of which are made of Whale-Bones; for Whales of a monstrous size are oftentimes cast up dead upon that shore. The Common People imagine, that by a secret Power bestowed by God upon the Temple, no Whale can pass it without immediate death. But the truth of the Matter is, that on either side of the Temple, there are Rocks that shoot two Miles into the Sea, and wound the Whales when they light upon 'em. They keep a Whale's Rib of an incredible length for a Miracle, which lying upon the Ground with its convex part uppermost, makes an Arch, the Head of which cannot be reached by a Man upon a Camel's Back. This Rib (says John Leo) is said to have layn there a hundred Years before I saw it. Their Historians affirm, that a Prophet who prophesy'd of Mahomet, came from this Temple, and some do not stand to assert, that the Prophet Jonas was cast forth by the Whale at the Base of the Temple."

In this Afric Temple of the Whale I leave you, reader, and if you be a Nantucketer, and a whaleman, you will silently worship there.

CHAPTER 105

DOES THE WHALE'S MAGNITUDE DIMINISH?—WILL HE PERISH?

Inasmuch, then, as this Leviathan comes floundering down upon us from the head-waters of the Eternities, it may be fitly inquired, whether, in the

1. Genesis 5.27: "And all the days of Methuselah were nine hundred sixty and nine years: and he died."
2. Noah's eldest son.
3. Now in the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris. Denderah is in Upper Egypt.
4. Johannes Leo, 16th-century Moor (known in Europe as Leo Africanus) in his *Geographical Historie of Africa* (1600). Melville found this quotation in the "Harris Collection," *Navigantium atque Itinerantium Blblioteca* (London, 1705), which he cited in "Extracts."

long course of his generations, he has not degenerated from the original bulk of his sires.

But upon investigation we find, that not only are the whales of the present day superior in magnitude to those whose fossil remains are found in the Tertiary system (embracing a distinct geological period prior to man), but of the whales found in that Tertiary system, those belonging to its latter formations exceed in size those of its earlier ones.

Of all the pre-adamite whales yet exhumed, by far the largest is the Alabama one mentioned in the last chapter, and that was less than seventy feet in length in the skeleton. Whereas, we have already seen, that the tape-measure gives seventy-two feet for the skeleton of a large sized modern whale. And I have heard, on whalemen's authority, that Sperm Whales have been captured near a hundred feet long at the time of capture.

But may it not be, that while the whales of the present hour are an advance in magnitude upon those of all previous geological periods; may it not be, that since Adam's time they have degenerated?

Assuredly, we must conclude so, if we are to credit the accounts of such gentlemen as Pliny,[1] and the ancient naturalists generally. For Pliny tells us of whales that embraced acres of living bulk, and Aldrovandus of others which measured eight hundred feet in length—Rope Walks and Thames Tunnels of Whales! And even in the days of Banks and Solander, Cook's naturalists, we find a Swedish member of the Academy of Sciences setting down certain Iceland Whales (reydar-fiskur, or Wrinkled Bellies) at one hundred and twenty yards; that is, three hundred and sixty feet. And Lacépède, the French naturalist, in his elaborate history of whales, in the very beginning of his work (page 3), sets down the Right Whale at one hundred metres, three hundred and twenty-eight feet. And this work was published so late as A. D. 1825.

But will any whaleman believe these stories? No. The whale of to-day is as big as his ancestors in Pliny's time. And if ever I go where Pliny is, I, a whaleman (more than he was), will make bold to tell him so. Because I cannot understand how it is, that while the Egyptian mummies that were buried thousands of years before even Pliny was born, do not measure so much in their coffins as a modern Kentuckian in his socks; and while the cattle and other animals sculptured on the oldest Egyptian and Nineveh tablets, by the relative proportions in which they are drawn, just as plainly prove that the high-bred, stall-fed, prize cattle of Smithfield,[2] not only equal, but far exceed in magnitude the fattest of Pharaoh's fat kine;[3] in the face of all this, I will not admit that of all animals the whale alone should have degenerated.

But still another inquiry remains; one often agitated by the more recondite Nantucketers. Whether owing to the almost omniscient look-outs at the mast-heads of the whale-ships, now penetrating even through Behring's straits, and into the remotest secret drawers and lockers of the world; and the thousand harpoons and lances darted along all continental coasts; the moot point is, whether Leviathan can long endure so wide a chase, and so remorseless a havoc; whether he must not at last be

1. For these exaggerated reports of the size of whales Melville plundered the *Penny Cyclopædia* article "Whales."
2. London livestock market.
3. Cattle described in Genesis 41.1–36.

exterminated from the waters, and the last whale, like the last man, smoke his last pipe, and then himself evaporate in the final puff.

Comparing the humped herds of whales with the humped herds of buffalo, which, not forty years ago, overspread by tens of thousands the prairies of Illinois and Missouri, and shook their iron manes and scowled with their thunder-clotted brows upon the sites of populous river-capitals, where now the polite broker sells you land at a dollar an inch; in such a comparison an irresistible argument would seem furnished, to show that the hunted whale cannot now escape speedy extinction.

But you must look at this matter in every light. Though so short a period ago—not a good life-time—the census of the buffalo in Illinois exceeded the census of men now in London, and though at the present day not one horn or hoof of them remains in all that region; and though the cause of this wondrous extermination was the spear of man; yet the far different nature of the whale-hunt peremptorily forbids so inglorious an end to the Leviathan. Forty men in one ship hunting the Sperm Whale for forty-eight months think they have done extremely well, and thank God, if at last they carry home the oil of forty fish. Whereas, in the days of the old Canadian and Indian hunters and trappers of the West, when the far west (in whose sunset suns still rise) was a wilderness and a virgin, the same number of moccasined men, for the same number of months, mounted on horse instead of sailing in ships, would have slain not forty, but forty thousand and more buffaloes; a fact that, if need were, could be statistically stated.

Nor, considered aright, does it seem any argument in favor of the gradual extinction of the Sperm Whale, for example, that in former years (the latter part of the last century, say) these Leviathans, in small pods, were encountered much oftener than at present, and, in consequence, the voyages were not so prolonged, and were also much more remunerative. Because, as has been elsewhere noticed,[4] those whales, influenced by some views to safety, now swim the seas in immense caravans, so that to a large degree the scattered solitaries, yokes, and pods, and schools of other days are now aggregated into vast but widely separated, unfrequent armies. That is all. And equally fallacious seems the conceit, that because the so-called whale-bone whales no longer haunt many grounds in former years abounding with them, hence that species also is declining. For they are only being driven from promontory to cape; and if one coast is no longer enlivened with their jets, then, be sure, some other and remoter strand has been very recently startled by the unfamiliar spectacle.

Furthermore: concerning these last mentioned Leviathans, they have two firm fortresses, which, in all human probability, will for ever remain impregnable. And as upon the invasion of their valleys, the frosty Swiss have retreated to their mountains; so, hunted from the savannas and glades of the middle seas, the whale-bone whales can at last resort to their Polar citadels, and diving under the ultimate glassy barriers and walls there, come up among icy fields and floes; and in a charmed circle of everlasting December, bid defiance to all pursuit from man.

But as perhaps fifty of these whale-bone whales are harpooned for one cachalot, some philosophers of the forecastle have concluded that this

4. In Ch. 87.

positive havoc has already very seriously diminished their battalions. But though for some time past a number of these whales, not less than 13,000, have been annually slain on the nor' west coast by the Americans alone; yet there are considerations which render even this circumstance of little or no account as an opposing argument in this matter.

Natural as it is to be somewhat incredulous concerning the populousness of the more enormous creatures of the globe, yet what shall we say to Horto,[5] the historian of Goa, when he tells us that at one hunting the King of Siam took 4000 elephants; that in those regions elephants are numerous as droves of cattle in the temperate climes. And there seems no reason to doubt that if these elephants, which have now been hunted for thousands of years, by Semiramis, by Porus, by Hannibal,[6] and by all the successive monarchs of the East—if they still survive there in great numbers, much more may the great whale outlast all hunting, since he has a pasture to expatiate in, which is precisely twice as large as all Asia, both Americas, Europe and Africa, New Holland,[7] and all the Isles of the sea combined.

Moreover: we are to consider, that from the presumed great longevity of whales, their probably attaining the age of a century and more, therefore at any one period of time, several distinct adult generations must be contemporary. And what that is, we may soon gain some idea of, by imagining all the grave-yards, cemeteries, and family vaults of creation yielding up the live bodies of all the men, women, and children who were alive seventy-five years ago; and adding this countless host to the present human population of the globe.

Wherefore, for all these things, we account the whale immortal in his species, however perishable in his individuality. He swam the seas before the continents broke water; he once swam over the site of the Tuileries, and Windsor Castle, and the Kremlin.[8] In Noah's flood he despised Noah's Ark; and if ever the world is to be again flooded, like the Netherlands, to kill off its rats, then the eternal whale will still survive, and rearing upon the topmost crest of the equatorial flood, spout his frothed defiance to the skies.

CHAPTER 106

ahab's leg

The precipitating manner in which Captain Ahab had quitted the Samuel Enderby of London, had not been unattended with some small violence to his own person. He had lighted with such energy upon a thwart[1] of his boat that his ivory leg had received a half-splintering shock. And when after gaining his own deck, and his own pivot-hole there, he so vehemently wheeled round with an urgent command to the steersman (it was, as ever, something about his not steering inflexibly enough); then, the already

5. Garcia ab Horton, Portuguese historian of Goa in India, as cited in Sir Thomas Browne's *Pseudodoxia Epidemica* (1646), 6.6.
6. Carthaginian general (247–185 B.C.E.), who crossed the Alps with elephants in an effort to defeat Rome. Semiramis was the legendary queen of Assyria and builder of Babylon. Porus was an Indian prince defeated by Alexander the Great in 327 B.C.E. (see also Ch. 87).
7. Early name for Australia.
8. Palaces in Paris, London, and Moscow, respectively.
1. A rower's seat, across the boat.

shaken ivory received such an additional twist and wrench, that though it still remained entire, and to all appearances lusty, yet Ahab did not deem it entirely trustworthy.

And, indeed, it seemed small matter for wonder, that for all his pervading, mad recklessness, Ahab did at times give careful heed to the condition of that dead bone upon which he partly stood. For it had not been very long prior to the Pequod's sailing from Nantucket, that he had been found one night lying prone upon the ground, and insensible; by some unknown, and seemingly inexplicable, unimaginable casualty, his ivory limb having been so violently displaced, that it had stake-wise smitten, and all but pierced his groin; nor was it without extreme difficulty that the agonizing wound was entirely cured.

Nor, at the time, had it failed to enter his monomaniac mind, that all the anguish of that then present suffering was but the direct issue of a former woe; and he too plainly seemed to see, that as the most poisonous reptile of the marsh perpetuates his kind as inevitably as the sweetest songster of the grove; so, equally with every felicity, all miserable events do naturally beget their like. Yea, more than equally, thought Ahab; since both the ancestry and posterity of Grief go further than the ancestry and posterity of Joy. For, not to hint of this: that it is an inference from certain canonic teachings, that while some natural enjoyments here shall have no children born to them for the other world, but, on the contrary, shall be followed by the joy-childlessness of all hell's despair; whereas, some guilty mortal miseries shall still fertilely beget to themselves an eternally progressive progeny of griefs beyond the grave; not at all to hint of this, there still seems an inequality in the deeper analysis of the thing. For, thought Ahab, while even the highest earthly felicities ever have a certain unsignifying pettiness lurking in them, but, at bottom, all heart-woes, a mystic significance, and, in some men, an archangelic grandeur; so do their diligent tracings-out not belie the obvious deduction. To trail the genealogies of these high mortal miseries, carries us at last among the sourceless primogenitures of the gods; so that, in the face of all the glad, hay-making suns, and soft-cymballing, round harvest-moons, we must needs give in to this: that the gods themselves are not for ever glad. The ineffaceable, sad birth-mark in the brow of man, is but the stamp of sorrow in the signers.

Unwittingly here a secret has been divulged, which perhaps might more properly, in set way, have been disclosed before. With many other particulars concerning Ahab, always had it remained a mystery to some, why it was, that for a certain period, both before and after the sailing of the Pequod, he had hidden himself away with such Grand-Lama-like[2] exclusiveness; and, for that one interval, sought speechless refuge, as it were, among the marble senate of the dead. Captain Peleg's bruited reason for this thing appeared by no means adequate; though, indeed, as touching all Ahab's deeper part, every revelation partook more of significant darkness than of explanatory light. But, in the end, it all came out; this one matter did, at least. That direful mishap was at the bottom of his temporary recluseness. And not only this, but to that ever-contracting, dropping

2. As reclusive as the Grand Lama of Tibet, cloistered Buddhist ruler of that then long-unexplored region of Asia.

circle ashore, who, for any reason, possessed the privilege of a less banned approach to him; to that timid circle the above hinted casualty—remaining, as it did, moodily unaccounted for by Ahab—invested itself with terrors, not entirely underived from the land of spirits and of wails. So that, through their zeal for him, they had all conspired, so far as in them lay, to muffle up the knowledge of this thing from others; and hence it was, that not till a considerable interval had elapsed, did it transpire upon the Pequod's decks.

But be all this as it may; let the unseen, ambiguous synod in the air, or the vindictive princes and potentates of fire, have to do or not with earthly Ahab, yet, in this present matter of his leg, he took plain practical procedures;—he called the carpenter.

And when that functionary appeared before him, he bade him without delay set about making a new leg, and directed the mates to see him supplied with all the studs and joists of jaw-ivory (Sperm Whale) which had thus far been accumulated on the voyage, in order that a careful selection of the stoutest, clearest-grained stuff might be secured. This done, the carpenter received orders to have the leg completed that night; and to provide all the fittings for it, independent of those pertaining to the distrusted one in use. Moreover, the ship's forge was ordered to be hoisted out of its temporary idleness in the hold; and, to accelerate the affair, the blacksmith was commanded to proceed at once to the forging of whatever iron contrivances might be needed.

CHAPTER 107

THE CARPENTER

Seat thyself sultanically among the moons of Saturn, and take high abstracted man alone; and he seems a wonder, a grandeur, and a woe. But from the same point, take mankind in mass, and for the most part, they seem a mob of unnecessary duplicates, both contemporary and hereditary. But most humble though he was, and far from furnishing an example of the high, humane abstraction; the Pequod's carpenter was no duplicate; hence, he now comes in person on this stage.

Like all sea-going ship carpenters, and more especially those belonging to whaling vessels, he was, to a certain off-handed, practical extent, alike experienced in numerous trades and callings collateral to his own; the carpenter's pursuit being the ancient and outbranching trunk of all those numerous handicrafts which more or less have to do with wood as an auxiliary material. But, besides the application to him of the generic remark above, this carpenter of the Pequod was singularly efficient in those thousand nameless mechanical emergencies continually recurring in a large ship, upon a three or four years' voyage, in uncivilized and far-distant seas. For not to speak of his readiness in ordinary duties:—repairing stove boats, sprung spars, reforming the shape of clumsy-bladed oars, inserting bull's eyes in the deck, or new tree-nails in the side planks, and other miscellaneous matters more directly pertaining to his special business; he was moreover unhesitatingly expert in all manner of conflicting aptitudes, both useful and capricious.

The one grand stage where he enacted all his various parts so manifold, was his vice-bench; a long rude ponderous table furnished with several vices, of different sizes, and both of iron and of wood. At all times except when whales were alongside, this bench was securely lashed athwartships against the rear of the Try-works.

A belaying pin is found too large to be easily inserted into its hole: the carpenter claps it into one of his ever-ready vices, and straightway files it smaller. A lost land-bird of strange plumage strays on board, and is made a captive: out of clean shaved rods of right-whale bone, and cross-beams of sperm whale ivory, the carpenter makes a pagoda-looking cage for it. An oarsman sprains his wrist: the carpenter concocts a soothing lotion. Stubb longs for vermillion stars to be painted upon the blade of his every oar: screwing each oar in his big vice of wood, the carpenter symmetrically supplies the constellation. A sailor takes a fancy to wear shark-bone ear-rings: the carpenter drills his ears. Another has the toothache: the carpenter out pincers, and clapping one hand upon his bench bids him be seated there; but the poor fellow unmanageably winces under the unconcluded operation; whirling round the handle of his wooden vice, the carpenter signs him to clap his jaw in that, if he would have him draw the tooth.

Thus, this carpenter was prepared at all points, and alike indifferent and without respect in all. Teeth he accounted bits of ivory; heads he deemed but top-blocks; men themselves he lightly held for capstans. But while now upon so wide a field thus variously accomplished, and with such liveliness of expertness in him, too; all this would seem to argue some uncommon vivacity of intelligence. But not precisely so. For nothing was this man more remarkable, than for a certain impersonal stolidity as it were; impersonal, I say; for it so shaded off into the surrounding infinite of things, that it seemed one with the general stolidity discernible in the whole visible world; which while pauselessly active in uncounted modes, still eternally holds its peace, and ignores you, though you dig foundations for cathedrals. Yet was this half-horrible stolidity in him, involving, too, as it appeared, an all-ramifying heartlessness;—yet was it oddly dashed at times, with an old, crutch-like, antediluvian, wheezing humorousness, not unstreaked now and then with a certain grizzled wittiness; such as might have served to pass the time during the midnight watch on the bearded forecastle of Noah's ark. Was it that this old carpenter had been a lifelong wanderer, whose much rolling, to and fro, not only had gathered no moss;[1] but what is more, had rubbed off whatever small outward clingings might have originally pertained to him? He was a stript abstract; an unfractioned integral; uncompromised as a new-born babe; living without premeditated reference to this world or the next. You might almost say, that this strange uncompromisedness in him involved a sort of unintelligence; for in his numerous trades, he did not seem to work so much by reason or by instinct, or simply because he had been tutored to it, or by any intermixture of all these, even or uneven; but merely by a kind of deaf and dumb, spontaneous literal process. He was a pure manipulator; his brain, if he had ever had one, must have early oozed along into the muscles of his fingers. He was like one of those unreasoning but still highly

1. Said of a rolling stone (proverbial).

useful, *multum in parvo*,[2] Sheffield contrivances, assuming the exterior—though a little swelled—of a common pocket knife; but containing, not only blades of various sizes, but also screw-drivers, cork-screws, tweezers, awls, pens, rulers, nail-filers, countersinkers. So, if his superiors wanted to use the carpenter for a screw-driver, all they had to do was to open that part of him, and the screw was fast: or if for tweezers, take him up by the legs, and there they were.

Yet, as previously hinted, this omnitooled, open-and-shut carpenter, was, after all, no mere machine of an automaton. If he did not have a common soul in him, he had a subtle something that somehow anomalously did its duty. What that was, whether essence of quicksilver, or a few drops of hartshorn, there is no telling. But there it was; and there it had abided for now some sixty years or more. And this it was, this same unaccountable, cunning life-principle in him; this it was, that kept him a great part of the time soliloquizing; but only like an unreasoning wheel, which also hummingly soliloquizes; or rather, his body was a sentry-box and this soliloquizer on guard there, and talking all the time to keep himself awake.

CHAPTER 108

AHAB AND THE CARPENTER

THE DECK—FIRST NIGHT WATCH

(*Carpenter standing before his vice-bench, and by the light of two lanterns busily filing the ivory joist for the leg, which joist is firmly fixed in the vice. Slabs of ivory, leather straps, pads, screws, and various tools of all sorts lying about the bench. Forward, the red flame of the forge is seen, where the blacksmith is at work.*)

Drat the file, and drat the bone! That is hard which should be soft, and that is soft which should be hard. So we go, who file old jaws and shinbones. Let's try another. Aye, now, this works better (*sneezes*). Halloa, this bone dust is (*sneezes*)—why it's (*sneezes*)—yes it's (*sneezes*)—bless my soul, it won't let me speak! This is what an old fellow gets now for working in dead lumber. Saw a live tree, and you don't get this dust; amputate a live bone, and you don't get it (*sneezes*). Come, come, you old Smut,[1] there, bear a hand, and let's have that ferule and buckle-screw; I'll be ready for them presently. Lucky now (*sneezes*) there's no knee-joint to make; that might puzzle a little; but a mere shinbone—why it's easy as making hop-poles;[2] only I should like to put a good finish on. Time, time; if I but only had the time, I could turn him out as neat a leg now as ever (*sneezes*) scraped[3] to a lady in a parlor. Those buckskin legs and calves of legs I've seen in shop windows wouldn't compare at all. They soak water, they do; and of course get rheumatic, and have to be doctored (*sneezes*) with washes and lotions, just like live legs. There; before I saw it off, now, I must call

2. Much in little (i.e., all-in-one); like a modern Swiss Army knife.
1. Sailors' name for the blacksmith (from the soot he works in).
2. Tall poles to support hop plants.
3. Bowed low, by scraping one foot backward along the floor.

his old Mogulship, and see whether the length will be all right; too short, if anything, I guess. Ha! that's the heel; we are in luck; here he comes, or it's somebody else, that's certain.

AHAB (*advancing*).

(*During the ensuing scene, the carpenter continues sneezing at times.*)

Well, manmaker!

Just in time, sir. If the captain pleases, I will now mark the length. Let me measure, sir.

Measured for a leg! good. Well, it's not the first time. About it! There; keep thy finger on it. This is a cogent vice thou hast here, carpenter; let me feel its grip once. So, so; it does pinch some.

Oh, sir, it will break bones—beware, beware!

No fear; I like a good grip; I like to feel something in this slippery world that can hold, man. What's Prometheus about there?—the blacksmith, I mean—what's he about?

He must be forging the buckle-screw, sir, now.

Right. It's a partnership; he supplies the muscle part. He makes a fierce red flame there!

Aye, sir; he must have the white heat for this kind of fine work.

Um-m. So he must. I do deem it now a most meaning thing, that that old Greek, Prometheus, who made men, they say, should have been a blacksmith, and animated them with fire; for what's made in fire must properly belong to fire; and so hell's probable. How the soot flies! This must be the remainder the Greek made the Africans of. Carpenter, when he's through with that buckle, tell him to forge a pair of steel shoulder-blades; there's a pedlar aboard with a crushing pack.[4]

Sir?

Hold; while Prometheus is about it, I'll order a complete man after a desirable pattern. Imprimis, fifty feet high in his socks; then, chest modelled after the Thames Tunnel; then, legs with roots to 'em, to stay in one place; then, arms three feet through the wrist; no heart at all, brass forehead, and about a quarter of an acre of fine brains; and let me see—shall I order eyes to see outwards? No, but put a sky-light on top of his head to illuminate inwards. There, take the order, and away.

Now, what's he speaking about, and who's he speaking to, I should like to know? Shall I keep standing here? (*aside.*)

'Tis but indifferent architecture to make a blind dome; here's one. No, no, no; I must have a lantern.

Ho, ho! That's it, hey? Here are two, sir; one will serve my turn.

What art thou thrusting that thief-catcher into my face for, man? Thrusted light is worse than presented pistols.

I thought, sir, that you spoke to carpenter.

Carpenter? why that's—but no;—a very tidy, and, I may say, an extremely gentlemanlike sort of business thou art in here, carpenter;—or would'st thou rather work in clay?

4. I.e., Ahab himself, bearing the woes he feels are piled on him.

Sir?—Clay? clay, sir? That's mud; we leave clay to ditchers, sir.

The fellow's impious![5] What art thou sneezing about?

Bone is rather dusty, sir.

Take the hint, then; and when thou art dead, never bury thyself under living people's noses.

Sir?—oh! ah!—I guess so;—yes—oh, dear!

Look ye, carpenter, I dare say thou callest thyself a right good workmanlike workman, eh? Well, then, will it speak thoroughly well for thy work, if, when I come to mount this leg thou makest, I shall nevertheless feel another leg in the same identical place with it; that is, carpenter, my old lost leg; the flesh and blood one, I mean. Canst thou not drive that old Adam away?

Truly, sir, I begin to understand somewhat now. Yes, I have heard something curious on that score, sir; how that a dismasted man never entirely loses the feeling of his old spar, but it will be still pricking him at times. May I humbly ask if it be really so, sir?

It is, man. Look, put thy live leg here in the place where mine once was; so, now, here is only one distinct leg to the eye yet two to the soul. Where thou feelest tingling life; there, exactly there, there to a hair, do I. Is't a riddle?

I should humbly call it a poser, sir.

Hist, then. How dost thou know that some entire, living, thinking thing may not be invisibly and uninterpenetratingly standing precisely where thou now standest; aye, and standing there in thy spite? In thy most solitary hours, then, dost thou not fear eavesdroppers? Hold, don't speak! And if I still feel the smart of my crushed leg, though it be now so long dissolved; then, why mayst not thou, carpenter, feel the fiery pains of hell for ever, and without a body? Hah!

Good Lord! Truly, sir, if it comes to that, I must calculate over again; I think I didn't carry a small figure, sir.[6]

Look ye, pudding-heads should never grant premises.—How long before the leg is done?

Perhaps an hour, sir.

Bungle away at it then, and bring it to me (*turns to go*). Oh, Life! Here I am, proud as a Greek god, and yet standing debtor to this blockhead for a bone to stand on! Cursed be that mortal inter-indebtedness which will not do away with ledgers. I would be free as air; and I'm down in the whole world's books. I am so rich, I could have given bid for bid with the wealthiest Prætorians[7] at the auction of the Roman empire (which was the world's); and yet I owe for the flesh in the tongue I brag with. By heavens! I'll get a crucible, and into it, and dissolve myself down to one small, compendious vertebra. So.

CARPENTER (*resuming his work*).

Well, well, well! Stubb knows him best of all, and Stubb always says he's queer; says nothing but that one sufficient little word queer; he's queer, says Stubb; he's queer—queer, queer; and keeps dinning it into Mr. Starbuck all

5. Blasphemous because, by traditional interpretation of Genesis 2.7, God made Adam of clay ("dust of the earth").
6. Ahab's propositions didn't add up the first time the carpenter tried to comprehend them.
7. This elite Roman guard often chose the emperor and once auctioned the office.

the time—queer, sir—queer, queer, very queer. And here's his leg! Yes, now that I think of it, here's his bedfellow! has a stick of whale's jaw-bone for a wife! And this is his leg; he'll stand on this. What was that now about one leg standing in three places, and all three places standing in one hell—how was that? Oh! I don't wonder he looked so scornful at me! I'm a sort of strange-thoughted sometimes, they say; but that's only haphazard-like. Then, a short, little old body like me, should never undertake to wade out into deep waters with tall, heron-built captains; the water chucks you under the chin pretty quick, and there's a great cry for lifeboats. And here's the heron's leg! long and slim, sure enough! Now, for most folks one pair of legs lasts a lifetime, and that must be because they use them mercifully, as a tender-hearted old lady uses her roly-poly old coach-horses. But Ahab; oh he's a hard driver. Look, driven one leg to death, and spavined the other for life, and now wears out bone legs by the cord. Halloa, there, you Smut! Bear a hand there with those screws, and let's finish it before the resurrection fellow[8] comes a-calling with his horn for all legs, true or false, as brewery-men go round collecting old beer barrels, to fill 'em up again. What a leg this is! It looks like a real live leg, filed down to nothing but the core; he'll be standing on this to-morrow; he'll be taking altitudes on it. Halloa! I almost forgot the little oval slate, smoothed ivory, where he figures up the latitude. So, so; chisel, file, and sand-paper, now!

CHAPTER 109

AHAB AND STARBUCK IN THE CABIN

According to usage they were pumping the ship next morning; and lo! no inconsiderable oil came up with the water; the casks below must have sprung a bad leak. Much concern was shown; and Starbuck went down into the cabin to report this unfavorable affair.[1]

Now, from the South and West the Pequod was drawing nigh to Formosa[2] and the Bashee Isles, between which lies one of the tropical outlets from the China waters into the Pacific. And so Starbuck found Ahab with a general chart of the oriental archipelagoes spread before him; and another separate one representing the long eastern coasts of the Japanese islands—Niphon, Matsmai, and Sikoke. With his snow-white new ivory leg braced against the screwed leg of his table, and with a long pruning-hook of a jackknife in his hand, the wondrous old man, with his back to the gangway door, was wrinkling his brow, and tracing his old courses again.

"Who's there?" hearing the footstep at the door, but not turning round to it. "On deck! Begone!"

"Captain Ahab mistakes; it is I. The oil in the hold is leaking, sir. We must up Burtons[3] and break out."

8. Angel (often identified as Gabriel) with his trumpet or horn, as in 1 Corinthians 15.52.
1. In Sperm-whalemen with any considerable quantity of oil on board, it is a regular semi-weekly duty to conduct a hose into the hold, and drench the casks with sea-water; which afterwards, at varying intervals, is removed by the ship's pumps. Hereby the casks are sought to be kept damply tight; while by the changed character of the withdrawn water, the mariners readily detect any serious leakage in the precious cargo. [Melville's note.]
2. Taiwan.
3. Tackle for hoisting sails.

"Up Burtons and break out? Now that we are nearing Japan; heave-to here for a week to tinker a parcel of old hoops?"

"Either do that, sir, or waste in one day more oil than we may make good in a year. What we come twenty thousand miles to get is worth saving, sir."

"So it is, so it is; if we get it."

"I was speaking of the oil in the hold, sir."

"And I was not speaking or thinking of that at all. Begone! Let it leak! I'm all aleak myself. Aye! leaks in leaks! not only full of leaky casks, but those leaky casks are in a leaky ship; and that's a far worse plight than the Pequod's, man. Yet I don't stop to plug my leak; for who can find it in the deep-loaded hull; or how hope to plug it, even if found, in this life's howling gale? Starbuck! I'll not have the Burtons hoisted."

"What will the owners say, sir?"

"Let the owners stand on Nantucket beach and outyell the Typhoons. What cares Ahab? Owners, owners? Thou art always prating to me, Starbuck, about those miserly owners, as if the owners were my conscience. But look ye, the only real owner of anything is its commander; and hark ye, my conscience is in this ship's keel.—On deck!"

"Captain Ahab," said the reddening mate, moving further into the cabin, with a daring so strangely respectful and cautious that it almost seemed not only every way seeking to avoid the slightest outward manifestation of itself, but within also seemed more than half distrustful of itself; "A better man than I might well pass over in thee what he would quickly enough resent in a younger man; aye, and in a happier, Captain Ahab."

"Devils! Dost thou then so much as dare to critically think of me?—On deck!"

"Nay, sir, not yet; I do entreat. And I do dare, sir—to be forbearing! Shall we not understand each other better than hitherto, Captain Ahab?"

Ahab seized a loaded musket from the rack (forming part of most South-Sea-men's cabin furniture), and pointing it towards Starbuck, exclaimed: "There is one God that is Lord over the earth, and one Captain that is lord over the Pequod.—On deck!"

For an instant in the flashing eyes of the mate, and his fiery cheeks, you would have almost thought that he had really received the blaze of the levelled tube. But, mastering his emotion, he half calmly rose, and as he quitted the cabin, paused for an instant and said: "Thou hast outraged, not insulted me, sir; but for that I ask thee not to beware of Starbuck; thou wouldst but laugh; but let Ahab beware of Ahab; beware of thyself, old man."

"He waxes brave, but nevertheless obeys; most careful bravery that!" murmured Ahab, as Starbuck disappeared. "What's that he said—Ahab beware of Ahab—there's something there!" Then unconsciously using the musket for a staff, with an iron brow he paced to and fro in the little cabin; but presently the thick plaits of his forehead relaxed, and returning the gun to the rack, he went to the deck.

"Thou art but too good a fellow, Starbuck," he said lowly to the mate; then raising his voice to the crew: "Furl the t'gallant-sails, and close-reef the top-sails, fore and aft; back the main-yard; up Burtons, and break out in the main-hold."

It were perhaps vain to surmise exactly why it was, that as respecting Starbuck, Ahab thus acted. It may have been a flash of honesty in him; or mere prudential policy which, under the circumstances, imperiously forbade the slightest symptom of open disaffection, however transient, in the important chief officer of his ship. However it was, his orders were executed; and the Burtons were hoisted.

CHAPTER 110

QUEEQUEG IN HIS COFFIN

Upon searching, it was found that the casks last struck into the hold were perfectly sound, and that the leak must be further off. So, it being calm weather, they broke out deeper and deeper, disturbing the slumbers of the huge ground-tier butts; and from that black midnight sending those gigantic moles into the daylight above. So deep did they go; and so ancient, and corroded, and weedy the aspect of the lowermost puncheons, that you almost looked next for some mouldy corner-stone cask, containing coins of Captain Noah, with copies of the posted placards, vainly warning the infatuated old world from the flood. Tierce after tierce, too, of water, and bread, and beef, and shooks of staves, and iron bundles of hoops, were hoisted out, till at last the piled decks were hard to get about; and the hollow hull echoed under foot, as if you were treading over empty catacombs, and reeled and rolled in the sea like an air-freighted demijohn. Top-heavy was the ship as a dinnerless student with all Aristotle in his head. Well was it that the Typhoons did not visit them then.

Now, at this time it was that my poor pagan companion, and fast bosom-friend, Queequeg, was seized with a fever, which brought him nigh to his endless end.

Be it said, that in this vocation of whaling, sinecures are unknown; dignity and danger go hand in hand; till you get to be Captain, the higher you rise the harder you toil. So with poor Queequeg, who, as harpooneer, must not only face all the rage of the living whale, but—as we have elsewhere seen—mount his dead back in a rolling sea; and finally descend into the gloom of the hold, and bitterly sweating all day in that subterraneous confinement, resolutely manhandle the clumsiest casks and see to their stowage. To be short, among whalemen, the harpooneers are the holders, so called.

Poor Queequeg! when the ship was about half disembowelled, you should have stooped over the hatchway, and peered down upon him there; where, stripped to his woollen drawers, the tattooed savage was crawling about amid that dampness and slime, like a green spotted lizard at the bottom of a well. And a well, or an ice-house, it somehow proved to him, poor pagan; where, strange to say, for all the heat of his sweatings, he caught a terrible chill which lapsed into a fever; and at last, after some days' suffering, laid him in his hammock, close to the very sill of the door of death. How he wasted and wasted away in those few long-lingering days, till there seemed but little left of him but his frame and tattooing. But as all else in him thinned, and his cheekbones grew sharper, his eyes, nevertheless, seemed growing fuller and fuller; they became of a strange softness of lustre; and mildly but deeply looked out at you there from his

sickness, a wondrous testimony to that immortal health in him which could not die, or be weakened. And like circles on the water, which, as they grow fainter, expand; so his eyes seemed rounding and rounding, like the rings of Eternity. An awe that cannot be named would steal over you as you sat by the side of this waning savage, and saw as strange things in his face, as any beheld who were bystanders when Zoroaster[1] died. For whatever is truly wondrous and fearful in man, never yet was put into words or books. And the drawing near of Death, which alike levels all, alike impresses all with a last revelation, which only an author from the dead could adequately tell. So that—let us say it again—no dying Chaldee or Greek had higher and holier thoughts than those, whose mysterious shades you saw creeping over the face of poor Queequeg, as he quietly lay in his swaying hammock, and the rolling sea seemed gently rocking him to his final rest, and the ocean's invisible flood-tide lifted him higher and higher towards his destined heaven.

Not a man of the crew but gave him up; and, as for Queequeg himself, what he thought of his case was forcibly shown by a curious favor he asked. He called one[2] to him in the grey morning watch, when the day was just breaking, and taking his hand, said that while in Nantucket he had chanced to see certain little canoes of dark wood, like the rich war-wood of his native isle; and upon inquiry, he had learned that all whalemen who died in Nantucket, were laid in those same dark canoes, and that the fancy of being so laid had much pleased him; for it was not unlike the custom of his own race, who, after embalming a dead warrior, stretched him out in his canoe, and so left him to be floated away to the starry archipelagoes; for not only do they believe that the stars are isles, but that far beyond all visible horizons, their own mild, uncontinented seas, interflow with the blue heavens; and so form the white breakers of the milky way—after saying this he added, that he shuddered at the thought of being buried in his hammock, according to the usual sea-custom, tossed like something vile to the death-devouring sharks. No: he desired a canoe like those of Nantucket, all the more congenial to him, being a whaleman, that like a whaleboat these coffin-canoes were without a keel; though that involved but uncertain steering, and much lee-way adown the dim ages.

Now, when this strange circumstance was made known aft, the carpenter was at once commanded to do Queequeg's bidding, whatever it might include. There was some heathenish, coffin-colored old lumber aboard, which, upon a long previous voyage, had been cut from the aboriginal groves of the Lackaday islands,[3] and from these dark planks the coffin was recommended to be made. No sooner was the carpenter apprised of the order, than taking his rule, he forthwith with all the indifferent promptitude of his character, proceeded into the forecastle and took Queequeg's measure with great accuracy, regularly chalking Queequeg's person as he shifted the rule.

"Ah! poor fellow! he'll have to die now," ejaculated the Long Island sailor.

Going to his vice-bench, the carpenter for convenience sake and general reference, now transferringly measured on it the exact length the

1. Founder of ancient Persian religion named after him (about 6th century B.C.E.).
2. This "one" should be Ishmael, his "bosom companion." The word could be a misreading of Melville's *me*, but the odd mysteriousness is heightened by submerged biblical echoes (see "called" and "one" in a concordance to the Bible, especially the New Testament).
3. Laccadive Islands, in the Arabian Sea. "Lackaday": lackadaisical, languishing, lazy.

coffin was to be, and then made the transfer permanent by cutting two notches at its extremities. This done, he marshalled the planks and his tools, and to work.

When the last nail was driven, and the lid duly planed and fitted, he lightly shouldered the coffin and went forward with it, inquiring whether they were ready for it yet in that direction.

Overhearing the indignant but half-humorous cries with which the people on deck began to drive the coffin away, Queequeg, to every one's consternation, commanded that the thing should be instantly brought to him, nor was there any denying him; seeing that, of all mortals, some dying men are the most tyrannical; and certainly, since they will shortly trouble us so little for evermore, the poor fellows ought to be indulged.

Leaning over in his hammock, Queequeg long regarded the coffin with an attentive eye. He then called for his harpoon, had the wooden stock drawn from it, and then had the iron part placed in the coffin along with one of the paddles of his boat. All by his own request, also, biscuits were then ranged round the sides within: a flask of fresh water was placed at the head, and a small bag of woody earth scraped up in the hold at the foot; and a piece of sail-cloth being rolled up for a pillow, Queequeg now entreated to be lifted into his final bed, that he might make trial of its comforts, if any it had. He lay without moving a few minutes, then told one to go to his bag and bring out his little god, Yojo. Then crossing his arms on his breast with Yojo between, he called for the coffin lid (hatch he called it) to be placed over him. The head part turned over with a leather hinge, and there lay Queequeg in his coffin with little but his composed countenance in view. "Rarmai" (it will do; it is easy), he murmured at last, and signed to be replaced in his hammock.

But ere this was done, Pip, who had been slily hovering near by all this while, drew nigh to him where he lay, and with soft sobbings, took him by the hand; in the other, holding his tambourine.

"Poor rover! will ye never have done with all this weary roving? where go ye now? But if the currents carry ye to those sweet Antilles[4] where the beaches are only beat with water-lilies, will ye do one little errand for me? Seek out one Pip, who's now been missing long: I think he's in those far Antilles. If ye find him, then comfort him; for he must be very sad; for look! he's left his tambourine behind;—I found it. Rig-a-dig, dig, dig! Now, Queequeg, die; and I'll beat ye your dying march."

"I have heard," murmured Starbuck, gazing down the scuttle, "that in violent fevers, men, all ignorance, have talked in ancient tongues; and that when the mystery is probed, it turns out always that in their wholly forgotten childhood those ancient tongues had been really spoken in their hearing by some lofty scholars. So, to my fond faith, poor Pip, in this strange sweetness of his lunacy, brings heavenly vouchers of all our heavenly homes. Where learned he that, but there?—Hark! he speaks again: but more wildly now."

"Form two and two! Let's make a General of him! Ho, where's his harpoon? Lay it across here.—Rig-a-dig, dig, dig! huzza! Oh for a game cock now to sit upon his head and crow! Queequeg dies game!—mind ye that;

4. The West Indies, in the Caribbean.

Queequeg dies game!—take ye good heed of that; Queequeg dies game! I say; game, game, game! but base little Pip, he died a coward; died all a'shiver;—out upon Pip! Hark ye; if ye find Pip, tell all the Antilles he's a runaway; a coward, a coward, a coward! Tell them he jumped from a whale-boat! I'd never beat my tambourine over base Pip, and hail him General, if he were once more dying here. No, no! shame upon all cowards—shame upon them! Let 'em go drown like Pip, that jumped from a whale-boat. Shame! shame!"

During all this, Queequeg lay with closed eyes, as if in a dream. Pip was led away, and the sick man was replaced in his hammock.

But now that he had apparently made every preparation for death; now that his coffin was proved a good fit, Queequeg suddenly rallied; soon there seemed no need of the carpenter's box: and thereupon, when some expressed their delighted surprise, he, in substance, said, that the cause of his sudden convalescence was this;—at a critical moment, he had just recalled a little duty ashore, which he was leaving undone; and therefore had changed his mind about dying: he could not die yet, he averred. They asked him, then, whether to live or die was a matter of his own sovereign will and pleasure. He answered, certainly. In a word, it was Queequeg's conceit, that if a man made up his mind to live, mere sickness could not kill him: nothing but a whale, or a gale, or some violent, ungovernable, unintelligent destroyer of that sort.

Now, there is this noteworthy difference between savage and civilized; that while a sick, civilized man may be six months convalescing, generally speaking, a sick savage is almost half-well again in a day. So, in good time my Queequeg gained strength; and at length after sitting on the windlass for a few indolent days (but eating with a vigorous appetite) he suddenly leaped to his feet, threw out arms and legs, gave himself a good stretching, yawned a little bit, and then springing into the head of his hoisted boat, and poising a harpoon, pronounced himself fit for a fight.

With a wild whimsiness, he now used his coffin for a sea-chest; and emptying into it his canvas bag of clothes, set them in order there. Many spare hours he spent, in carving the lid with all manner of grotesque figures and drawings; and it seemed that hereby he was striving, in his rude way, to copy parts of the twisted tattooing on his body. And this tattooing, had been the work of a departed prophet and seer of his island, who, by those hieroglyphic marks, had written out on his body a complete theory of the heavens and the earth, and a mystical treatise on the art of attaining truth; so that Queequeg in his own proper person was a riddle to unfold; a wondrous work in one volume; but whose mysteries not even himself could read, though his own live heart beat against them; and these mysteries were therefore destined in the end to moulder away with the living parchment whereon they were inscribed, and so be unsolved to the last. And this thought it must have been which suggested to Ahab that wild exclamation of his, when one morning turning away from surveying poor Queequeg—"Oh, devilish tantalization of the gods!"

CHAPTER 111

THE PACIFIC

When gliding by the Bashee isles we emerged at last upon the great South Sea; were it not for other things, I could have greeted my dear Pacific with uncounted thanks, for now the long supplication of my youth was answered; that serene ocean rolled eastwards from me a thousand leagues of blue.

There is, one knows not what sweet mystery about this sea, whose gently awful stirrings seem to speak of some hidden soul beneath; like those fabled undulations of the Ephesian sod over the buried Evangelist St. John.[1] And meet it is, that over these sea-pastures, wide-rolling watery prairies and Potters' Fields[2] of all four continents, the waves should rise and fall, and ebb and flow unceasingly; for here, millions of mixed shades and shadows, drowned dreams, somnambulisms, reveries; all that we call lives and souls, lie dreaming, dreaming, still; tossing like slumberers in their beds; the ever-rolling waves but made so by their restlessness.

To any meditative Magian rover, this serene Pacific, once beheld, must ever after be the sea of his adoption.[3] It rolls the midmost waters of the world, the Indian ocean and Atlantic being but its arms. The same waves wash the moles of the new-built Californian towns, but yesterday planted by the recentest race of men, and lave the faded but still gorgeous skirts of Asiatic lands, older than Abraham; while all between float milky-ways of coral isles, and low-lying, endless, unknown Archipelagoes, and impenetrable Japans.[4] Thus this mysterious, divine Pacific zones the world's whole bulk about; makes all coasts one bay to it; seems the tide-beating heart of earth. Lifted by those eternal swells, you needs must own the seductive god, bowing your head to Pan.

But few thoughts of Pan[5] stirred Ahab's brain, as standing like an iron statue at his accustomed place beside the mizen rigging, with one nostril he unthinkingly snuffed the sugary musk from the Bashee isles (in whose sweet woods mild lovers must be walking), and with the other consciously inhaled the salt breath of the new found sea; that sea in which the hated White Whale must even then be swimming. Launched at length upon these almost final waters, and gliding towards the Japanese cruising-ground, the old man's purpose intensified itself. His firm lips met like the lips of a vice; the Delta[6] of his forehead's veins swelled like overladen

1. As Melville knew from Bayle's *Dictionary* (1697), St. Augustine reported that the sod above St. John's grave in Asia Minor moved like the bedclothes of a man sleeping.
2. Public burial places for poor criminals and unidentified persons, but always with an allusion to the first potter's field, bought with the money paid for Jesus' betrayal (Matthew 27.5–7). Judas took thirty pieces of silver for betraying Jesus, then after his crucifixion returned it to the chief priests, who then used it to purchase a field from an actual potter, a man who made pots, so they would have a place to bury strangers.
3. To a rover meditative like an ancient Mede or Persian priest (magus), the Pacific, once he has found it, is the place most suited to his temperament. In Cologne in 1849, Melville mused on the historical associations of the place during the long Holy Roman Empire (alluded to throughout *Moby-Dick*) and the power of such associations within "a pondering man" like him.
4. Japan was not opened to Western commerce until 1856, following Commodore Matthew Perry's shows of force with his fleet in 1853 and 1854.
5. Pantheistic thoughts about the benign oneness of nature such as those of the youth at the end of Ch. 25.
6. The veins of Ahab's forehead are sodden with blood, as the delta of a river is loaded with silt-thick water.

brooks; in his very sleep, his ringing cry ran through the vaulted hull, "Stern all! the White Whale spouts thick blood!"

CHAPTER 112

THE BLACKSMITH

Availing himself of the mild, summer-cool weather that now reigned in these latitudes, and in preparation for the peculiarly active pursuits shortly to be anticipated, Perth, the begrimed, blistered old blacksmith, had not removed his portable forge to the hold again, after concluding his contributory work for Ahab's leg, but still retained it on deck, fast lashed to ringbolts by the foremast; being now almost incessantly invoked by the headsmen, and harpooneers, and bowsmen to do some little job for them; altering, or repairing, or new shaping their various weapons and boat furniture. Often he would be surrounded by an eager circle, all waiting to be served; holding boat-spades, pike-heads, harpoons, and lances, and jealously watching his every sooty movement, as he toiled. Nevertheless, this old man's was a patient hammer wielded by a patient arm. No murmur, no impatience, no petulence did come from him. Silent, slow, and solemn; bowing over still further his chronically broken back, he toiled away, as if toil were life itself, and the heavy beating of his hammer the heavy beating of his heart. And so it was.—Most miserable!

A peculiar walk in this old man, a certain slight but painful appearing yawing in his gait, had at an early period of the voyage excited the curiosity of the mariners. And to the importunity of their persisted questionings he had finally given in; and so it came to pass that every one now knew the shameful story of his wretched fate.

Belated, and not innocently, one bitter winter's midnight, on the road running between two country towns, the blacksmith half-stupidly felt the deadly numbness stealing over him, and sought refuge in a leaning, dilapidated barn. The issue was, the loss of the extremities of both feet. Out of this revelation, part by part, at last came out the four acts of the gladness and the one long, and as yet uncatastrophied fifth act of the grief of his life's drama.

He was an old man, who, at the age of nearly sixty, had postponedly encountered that thing in sorrow's technicals called ruin. He had been an artisan of famed excellence, and with plenty to do; owned a house and garden; embraced a youthful, daughter-like, loving wife, and three blithe, ruddy children; every Sunday went to a cheerful-looking church, planted in a grove. But one night, under cover of darkness, and further concealed in a most cunning disguisement, a desperate burglar slid into his happy home, and robbed them all of everything. And darker yet to tell, the blacksmith himself did ignorantly conduct this burglar into his family's heart. It was the Bottle Conjuror![1] Upon the opening of that fatal cork, forth flew the fiend, and shrivelled up his home. Now, for prudent, most wise, and

1. The "Conjurer" in the bottle is the alcohol that robbed Perth's home of its happiness. Something complicated seems to be going on here (perhaps a personal joke), but Melville (or Ishmael) is playing with the sentimental, melodramatic language of Temperance literature.

economic reasons, the blacksmith's shop was in the basement of his dwelling, but with a separate entrance to it; so that always had the young and loving healthy wife listened with no unhappy nervousness, but with vigorous pleasure, to the stout ringing of her young-armed old husband's hammer; whose reverberations, muffled by passing through the floors and walls, came up to her, not unsweetly, in her nursery; and so, to stout Labor's iron lullaby, the blacksmith's infants were rocked to slumber.

Oh, woe on woe! Oh, Death, why canst thou not sometimes be timely? Hadst thou taken this old blacksmith to thyself ere his full ruin came upon him, then had the young widow had a delicious grief, and her orphans a truly venerable, legendary sire to dream of in their after years; and all of them a care-killing competency. But Death plucked down some virtuous elder brother, on whose whistling daily toil solely hung the responsibilities of some other family, and left the worse than useless old man standing, till the hideous rot of life should make him easier to harvest.

Why tell the whole? The blows of the basement hammer every day grew more and more between; and each blow every day grew fainter than the last; the wife sat frozen at the window, with tearless eyes, glitteringly gazing into the weeping faces of her children; the bellows fell; the forge choked up with cinders; the house was sold; the mother dived down into the long church-yard grass; her children twice[2] followed her thither; and the houseless, familyless old man staggered off a vagabond in crape; his every woe unreverenced; his grey head a scorn to flaxen curls!

Death seems the only desirable sequel for a career like this; but Death is only a launching into the region of the strange Untried; it is but the first salutation to the possibilities of the immense Remote, the Wild, the Watery, the Unshored; therefore, to the death-longing eyes of such men, who still have left in them some interior compunctions against suicide, does the all-contributed and all-receptive ocean alluringly spread forth his whole plain of unimaginable, taking terrors, and wonderful, new-life adventures; and from the hearts of infinite Pacifics, the thousand mermaids sing to them—"Come hither, broken-hearted; here is another life without the guilt of intermediate death; here are wonders supernatural, without dying for them. Come hither! bury thyself in a life which, to your now equally abhorred and abhorring, landed world, is more oblivious than death. Come hither! put up *thy* gravestone, too, within the churchyard, and come hither, till we marry thee!"

Hearkening to these voices, East and West, by early sun-rise, and by fall of eve, the blacksmith's soul responded, Aye, I come! And so Perth went a-whaling.

CHAPTER 113

THE FORGE

With matted beard, and swathed in a bristling shark-skin apron, about mid-day, Perth was standing between his forge and anvil, the latter placed upon an iron-wood log, with one hand holding a pike-head in the coals,

2. "Thrice"?

and with the other at his forge's lungs, when Captain Ahab came along, carrying in his hand a small rusty-looking leathern bag. While yet a little distance from the forge, moody Ahab paused; till at last, Perth, withdrawing his iron from the fire, began hammering it upon the anvil—the red mass sending off the sparks in thick hovering flights, some of which flew close to Ahab.

"Are these thy Mother Carey's chickens,[1] Perth? they are always flying in thy wake; birds of good omen, too, but not to all;—look here, they burn; but thou—thou liv'st among them without a scorch."

"Because I am scorched all over, Captain Ahab," answered Perth, resting for a moment on his hammer; "I am past scorching; not easily can'st thou scorch a scar."

"Well, well; no more. Thy shrunk voice sounds too calmly, sanely woful to me. In no Paradise myself, I am impatient of all misery in others that is not mad. Thou should'st go mad, blacksmith; say, why dost thou not go mad? How can'st thou endure without being mad? Do the heavens yet hate thee, that thou can'st not go mad?—What wert thou making there?"

"Welding an old pike-head, sir; there were seams and dents in it."

"And can'st thou make it all smooth again, blacksmith, after such hard usage as it had?"

"I think so, sir."

"And I suppose thou can'st smoothe almost any seams and dents; never mind how hard the metal, blacksmith?"

"Aye, sir, I think I can; all seams and dents but one."

"Look ye here, then," cried Ahab, passionately advancing, and leaning with both hands on Perth's shoulders; "look ye here—*here*—can ye smoothe out a seam like this, blacksmith," sweeping one hand across his ribbed brow; "if thou could'st, blacksmith, glad enough would I lay my head upon thy anvil, and feel thy heaviest hammer between my eyes. Answer! Can'st thou smoothe this seam?"

"Oh! that is the one, sir! Said I not all seams and dents but one?"

"Aye, blacksmith, it is the one; aye, man, it is unsmoothable; for though thou only see'st it here in my flesh, it has worked down into the bone of my skull—*that* is all wrinkles! But, away with child's play; no more gaffs and pikes to-day. Look ye here!" jingling the leathern bag, as if it were full of gold coins. "I, too, want a harpoon made; one that a thousand yoke of fiends could not part, Perth; something that will stick in a whale like his own fin-bone. There's the stuff," flinging the pouch upon the anvil. "Look ye, blacksmith, these are the gathered nail-stubbs of the steel shoes of racing horses."

"Horse-shoe stubbs, sir? Why, Captain Ahab, thou hast here, then, the best and stubbornest stuff we blacksmiths ever work."

"I know it, old man; these stubbs will weld together like glue from the melted bones of murderers. Quick! forge me the harpoon. And forge me first, twelve rods for its shank; then wind, and twist, and hammer these twelve together like the yarns and strands of a tow-line. Quick! I'll blow the fire."

When at last the twelve rods were made, Ahab tried them, one by one, by spiraling them, with his own hand, round a long, heavy iron bolt. "A flaw!" rejecting the last one. "Work that over again, Perth."

1. Seabirds, petrels that follow ships at sea.

This done, Perth was about to begin welding the twelve into one, when Ahab stayed his hand, and said he would weld his own iron. As, then, with regular, gasping hems, he hammered on the anvil, Perth passing to him the glowing rods, one after the other, and the hard pressed forge shooting up its intense straight flame, the Parsee passed silently, and bowing over his head towards the fire, seemed invoking some curse or some blessing on the toil. But, as Ahab looked up, he slid aside.

"What's that bunch of lucifers dodging about there for?" muttered Stubb, looking on from the forecastle. "That Parsee smells fire like a fusee;[2] and smells of it himself, like a hot musket's powder-pan."

At last the shank, in one complete rod, received its final heat; and as Perth, to temper it, plunged it all hissing into the cask of water near by, the scalding steam shot up into Ahab's bent face.

"Would'st thou brand me, Perth?" wincing for a moment with the pain; "have I been but forging my own branding-iron, then?"

"Pray God, not that; yet I fear something, Captain Ahab. Is not this harpoon for the White Whale?"

"For the white fiend! But now for the barbs; thou must make them thyself, man. Here are my razors—the best of steel; here, and make the barbs sharp as the needle-sleet of the Icy Sea."

For a moment, the old blacksmith eyed the razors as though he would fain not use them.

"Take them, man, I have no need for them; for I now neither shave, sup, nor pray till——but here—to work!"

Fashioned at last into an arrowy shape, and welded by Perth to the shank, the steel soon pointed the end of the iron; and as the blacksmith was about giving the barbs their final heat, prior to tempering them, he cried to Ahab to place the water-cask near.

"No, no—no water for that; I want it of the true death-temper. Ahoy, there! Tashtego, Queequeg, Daggoo! What say ye, pagans! Will ye give me as much blood as will cover this barb?" holding it high up. A cluster of dark nods replied, Yes. Three punctures were made in the heathen flesh, and the White Whale's barbs were then tempered.

"Ego non baptizo te in nomine patris, sed in nomine diaboli!"[3] deliriously howled Ahab, as the malignant iron scorchingly devoured the baptismal blood.

Now, mustering the spare poles from below, and selecting one of hickory, with the bark still investing it, Ahab fitted the end to the socket of the iron. A coil of new tow-line was then unwound, and some fathoms of it taken to the windlass, and stretched to a great tension. Pressing his foot upon it, till the rope hummed like a harp-string, then eagerly bending over it, and seeing no strandings, Ahab exclaimed, "Good! and now for the seizings."

At one extremity the rope was unstranded, and the separate spread yarns were all braided and woven round the socket of the harpoon; the pole was

2. Stubb is playing on Lucifer (the devil) and lucifers, friction matches, then recently invented in Scotland and marketed in England, with fusees (bulbs of powder) attached to little wooden sticks, for striking. The American "loco-foco" match of the 1830s was an improvement in safety.
3. I do not baptize you in the name of the father, but in the name of the devil (Latin). As Geoffrey Sanborn discovered (1992), long-debated notes quoting this formula that Melville made in his copy of Shakespeare were simply reading notes on an essay on the persecution of witches in the July 1823 *Quarterly Review*. See "*Moby-Dick* and Melville's Notes in His Shakespeare," on p. 543 herein.

then driven hard up into the socket; from the lower end the rope was traced half way along the pole's length, and firmly secured so, with intertwistings of twine. This done, pole, iron, and rope—like the Three Fates—remained inseparable, and Ahab moodily stalked away with the weapon; the sound of his ivory leg, and the sound of the hickory pole, both hollowly ringing along every plank. But ere he entered his cabin, a light, unnatural, half-bantering, yet most piteous sound was heard. Oh, Pip! thy wretched laugh, thy idle but unresting eye; all thy strange mummeries not unmeaningly blended with the black tragedy of the melancholy ship, and mocked it!

CHAPTER 114

THE GILDER

Penetrating further and further into the heart of the Japanese cruising ground, the Pequod was soon all astir in the fishery. Often, in mild, pleasant weather, for twelve, fifteen, eighteen, and twenty hours on the stretch, they were engaged in the boats, steadily pulling, or sailing, or paddling after the whales, or for an interlude of sixty or seventy minutes calmly awaiting their uprising; though with but small success for their pains.

At such times, under an abated sun; afloat all day upon smooth, slow heaving swells; seated in his boat, light as a birch canoe; and so sociably mixing with the soft waves themselves, that like hearth-stone cats they purr against the gunwale; these are the times of dreamy quietude, when beholding the tranquil beauty and brilliancy of the ocean's skin, one forgets the tiger heart that pants beneath it; and would not willingly remember, that this velvet paw but conceals a remorseless fang.

These are the times, when in his whale-boat the rover softly feels a certain filial, confident, land-like feeling towards the sea; that he regards it as so much flowery earth; and the distant ship revealing only the tops of her masts, seems struggling forward, not through high rolling waves, but through the tall grass of a rolling prairie: as when the western emigrants' horses only show their erected ears, while their hidden bodies widely wade through the amazing verdure.

The long-drawn virgin vales; the mild blue hill-sides; as over these there steals the hush, the hum; you almost swear that play-wearied children lie sleeping in these solitudes, in some glad May-time, when the flowers of the woods are plucked. And all this mixes with your most mystic mood; so that fact and fancy, half-way meeting, interpenetrate, and form one seamless whole.

Nor did such soothing scenes, however temporary, fail of at least as temporary an effect on Ahab. But if these secret golden keys did seem to open in him his own secret golden treasuries, yet did his breath upon them prove but tarnishing.

"Oh, grassy glades! oh, ever vernal endless landscapes in the soul; in ye,—though long parched by the dead drought of the earthy life,—in ye, men yet may roll, like young horses in new morning clover; and for some few fleeting moments, feel the cool dew of the life immortal on them. Would to God these blessed calms would last. But the mingled, mingling threads of life are woven by warp and woof: calms crossed by

storms, a storm for every calm. There is no steady unretracing progress in this life; we do not advance through fixed gradations, and at the last one pause:—through infancy's unconscious spell, boyhood's thoughtless faith, adolescence' doubt (the common doom), then scepticism, then disbelief, resting at last in manhood's pondering repose of If. But once gone through, we trace the round again; and are infants, boys, and men, and Ifs eternally. Where lies the final harbor, whence we unmoor no more? In what rapt ether sails the world, of which the weariest will never weary? Where is the foundling's father hidden? Our souls are like those orphans whose unwedded mothers die in bearing them: the secret of our paternity lies in their grave, and we must there to learn it."[1]

And that same day, too, gazing far down from his boat's side into that same golden sea, Starbuck lowly murmured:—

"Loveliness unfathomable, as ever lover saw in his young bride's eye!—Tell me not of thy teeth-tiered sharks, and thy kidnapping cannibal ways. Let faith oust fact; let fancy oust memory; I look deep down and do believe."

And Stubb, fish-like, with sparkling scales, leaped up in that same golden light:—

"I am Stubb, and Stubb has his history; but here Stubb takes oaths that he has always been jolly!"

CHAPTER 115

THE PEQUOD MEETS THE BACHELOR

And jolly enough were the sights and the sounds that came bearing down before the wind, some few weeks after Ahab's harpoon had been welded.

It was a Nantucket ship, the Bachelor, which had just wedged in her last cask of oil, and bolted down her bursting hatches; and now, in glad holiday apparel, was joyously, though somewhat vain-gloriously, sailing round among the widely-separated ships on the ground, previous to pointing her prow for home.

The three men at her mast-heads wore long streamers of narrow red bunting at their hats; from the stern, a whale-boat was suspended, bottom down;[1] and hanging captive from the bowsprit was seen the long lower jaw of the last whale they had slain. Signals, ensigns, and jacks of all colors were flying from her rigging, on every side. Sideways lashed in each of her three basketed tops were two barrels of sperm; above which, in her top-mast cross-trees, you saw slender breakers of the same precious fluid; and nailed to her main truck was a brazen lamp.

As was afterwards learned, the Bachelor had met with the most surprising success; all the more wonderful, for that while cruising in the same seas numerous other vessels had gone entire months without securing a

1. The putting of quotation marks around this paragraph makes it clear that Ahab is the speaker, in a chapter built on a series of meditations by Ishmael (who is soothed into "dreamy quietude"), by Ahab (whose "breath" proves tarnishing), by Starbuck (who looks down and believes), and by Stubb (who rejoices in his jollity). The fact that critics have taken the long paragraph as Ishmael's is suggestive in light of Ishmael's distance from Ahab in his explicit claim to be tragic dramatist of the book and who aspires to make Ahab grand without "majestical trappings and housings" (Ch. 33): "Oh, Ahab! what shall be grand in thee, it must needs be plucked at from the skies, and dived for in the deep, and featured in the unbodied air!"

1. Whalers normally had four boats (three larboard, one starboard) suspended over the sides, bottom down. Perhaps the *Bachelor* is gloating that from now on the boat would not be used for whaling.

single fish. Not only had barrels of beef and bread been given away to make room for the far more valuable sperm, but additional supplemental casks had been bartered for, from the ships she had met; and these were stowed along the deck, and in the captain's and officers' state-rooms. Even the cabin table itself had been knocked into kindling-wood; and the cabin mess dined off the broad head of an oil-butt, lashed down to the floor for a centrepiece. In the forecastle, the sailors had actually caulked and pitched their chests, and filled them; it was humorously added, that the cook had clapped a head on his largest boiler, and filled it; that the steward had plugged his spare coffeepot and filled it; that the harpooneers had headed the sockets of their irons and filled them; that indeed everything was filled with sperm, except the captain's pantaloons pockets, and those he reserved to thrust his hands into, in self-complacent testimony of his entire satisfaction.

As this glad ship of good luck bore down upon the moody Pequod, the barbarian sound of enormous drums came from her forecastle; and drawing still nearer, a crowd of her men were seen standing round her huge try-pots, which, covered with the parchment-like *poke* or stomach skin of the black fish, gave forth a loud roar to every stroke of the clenched hands of the crew. On the quarter-deck, the mates and harpooneers were dancing with the olive-hued girls who had eloped with them from the Polynesian Isles; while suspended in an ornamented boat, firmly secured aloft between the foremast and mainmast, three Long Island negroes, with glittering fiddle-bows of whale ivory, were presiding over the hilarious jig. Meanwhile, others of the ship's company were tumultuously busy at the masonry of the try-works, from which the huge pots had been removed. You would have almost thought they were pulling down the cursed Bastile,[2] such wild cries they raised, as the now useless brick and mortar were being hurled into the sea.

Lord and master over all this scene, the captain stood erect on the ship's elevated quarter-deck, so that the whole rejoicing drama was full before him, and seemed merely contrived for his own individual diversion.

And Ahab, he too was standing on his quarter-deck, shaggy and black, with a stubborn gloom; and as the two ships crossed each other's wakes—one all jubilations for things passed, the other all forebodings as to things to come—their two captains in themselves impersonated the whole striking contrast of the scene.

"Come aboard, come aboard!" cried the gay Bachelor's commander, lifting a glass and a bottle in the air.

"Hast seen the White Whale?" gritted Ahab in reply.

"No; only heard of him; but don't believe in him at all," said the other good-humoredly. "Come aboard!"

"Thou art too damned jolly. Sail on. Hast lost any men?"

"Not enough to speak of—two islanders,[3] that's all;—but come aboard, old hearty, come along. I'll soon take that black from your brow. Come along, will ye (merry's the play); a full ship and homeward-bound."

2. Parisian prison pulled down by a French mob in 1789.
3. This deadpan speech of the captain of the *Bachelor* is analogous to the telling answer Mark Twain has Huck Finn give to a question as to whether anyone was hurt in a steamboat explosion (*Huckleberry Finn,* Ch. 32): "'No'm. Killed a nigger.'" Like Twain, Melville knew exactly what ironic point he was making about the value of human lives.

"How wondrous familiar is a fool!" muttered Ahab; then aloud, "Thou art a full ship and homeward bound, thou sayst; well, then, call me an empty ship, and outward-bound. So go thy ways, and I will mine. Forward there! Set all sail, and keep her to the wind!"

And thus, while the one ship went cheerily before the breeze, the other stubbornly fought against it; and so the two vessels parted; the crew of the Pequod looking with grave, lingering glances towards the receding Bachelor; but the Bachelor's men never heeding their gaze for the lively revelry they were in. And as Ahab, leaning over the taffrail, eyed the homeward-bound craft, he took from his pocket a small vial of sand, and then looking from the ship to the vial, seemed thereby bringing two remote associations together, for that vial was filled with Nantucket soundings.

CHAPTER 116

THE DYING WHALE

Not seldom in this life, when, on the right side, fortune's favorites sail close by us, we, though all adroop before, catch somewhat of the rushing breeze, and joyfully feel our bagging sails fill out. So seemed it with the Pequod. For next day after encountering the gay Bachelor, whales were seen and four were slain; and one of them by Ahab.

It was far down the afternoon; and when all the spearings of the crimson fight were done: and floating in the lovely sunset sea and sky, sun and whale both stilly died together; then, such a sweetness and such plaintiveness, such inwreathing orisons curled up in that rosy air, that it almost seemed as if far over from the deep green convent valleys of the Manilla isles,[1] the Spanish land-breeze, wantonly turned sailor, had gone to sea, freighted with these vesper hymns.

Soothed again, but only soothed to deeper gloom, Ahab, who had sterned off from the whale, sat intently watching his final wanings from the now tranquil boat. For that strange spectacle observable in all sperm whales dying—the turning sunwards of the head, and so expiring—that strange spectacle, beheld of such a placid evening, somehow to Ahab conveyed a wondrousness unknown before.

"He turns and turns him to it,—how slowly, but how steadfastly, his homage-rendering and invoking brow, with his last dying motions. He too worships fire; most faithful, broad, baronial vassal of the sun!—Oh that these too-favoring eyes should see these too-favoring sights. Look! here, far water-locked; beyond all hum of human weal or woe; in these most candid and impartial seas; where to traditions no rocks furnish tablets; where for long Chinese ages, the billows have still rolled on speechless and unspoken to, as stars that shine upon the Niger's unknown source;[2] here, too, life dies sunwards full of faith; but see! no sooner dead, than death whirls round the corpse, and it heads some other way.—

"Oh, thou dark Hindoo half of nature, who of drowned bones hast builded thy separate throne somewhere in the heart of these unverdured

1. The Philippines.
2. The source of this great African river had been discovered in Melville's youth, but much of the continent had not been mapped at the time of *Moby-Dick*.

seas; thou art an infidel, thou queen, and too truly speakest to me in the wide-slaughtering Typhoon, and the hushed burial of its after calm. Nor has this thy whale sunwards turned his dying head, and then gone round again, without a lesson to me.

"Oh, trebly hooped and welded hip of power! Oh, high aspiring, rainbowed jet!—that one striveth, this one jetteth all in vain! In vain, oh whale, dost thou seek intercedings with yon all-quickening sun, that only calls forth life, but gives it not again. Yet dost thou, darker half, rock me with a prouder, if a darker faith. All thy unnamable imminglings float beneath me here; I am buoyed by breaths of once living things, exhaled as air, but water now.

"Then hail, for ever hail, O sea, in whose eternal tossings the wild fowl finds his only rest. Born of earth, yet suckled by the sea; though hill and valley mothered me, ye billows are my foster-brothers!"

CHAPTER 117

THE WHALE WATCH

The four whales slain that evening had died wide apart; one, far to windward; one, less distant, to leeward; one ahead; one astern. These last three were brought alongside ere nightfall; but the windward one could not be reached till morning; and the boat that had killed it lay by its side all night; and that boat was Ahab's.

The waif-pole was thrust upright into the dead whale's spout-hole; and the lantern hanging from its top, cast a troubled flickering glare upon the black, glossy back, and far out upon the midnight waves, which gently chafed the whale's broad flank, like soft surf upon a beach.

Ahab and all his boat's crew seemed asleep but the Parsee; who crouching in the bow, sat watching the sharks, that spectrally played round the whale, and tapped the light cedar planks with their tails. A sound like the moaning in squadrons over Asphaltites[1] of unforgiven ghosts of Gomorrah, ran shuddering through the air.

Started from his slumbers, Ahab, face to face, saw the Parsee; and hooped round by the gloom of the night they seemed the last men in a flooded world. "I have dreamed it again," said he.

"Of the hearses? Have I not said, old man, that neither hearse nor coffin can be thine?"

"And who are hearsed that die on the sea?"

"But I said, old man, that ere thou couldst die on this voyage, two hearses must verily be seen by thee on the sea; the first not made by mortal hands; and the visible wood of the last one must be grown in America."

"Aye, aye! a strange sight that, Parsee:—a hearse and its plumes floating over the ocean with the waves for the pall-bearers. Ha! Such a sight we shall not soon see."

"Believe it or not, thou canst not die till it be seen, old man."

"And what was that saying about thyself?"

"Though it come to the last, I shall still go before thee thy pilot."

1. In *Pseudodoxia Epidemica* 7.15, Sir Thomas Browne's name for the Dead Sea, the site of Sodom and Gomorrah, destroyed by God for their wickedness (Genesis 19.24–25). The dark bituminous mineral asphalt is abundant there.

"And when thou art so gone before—if that ever befall—then ere I can follow, thou must still appear to me, to pilot me still?—Was it not so? Well, then, did I believe all ye say, oh my pilot! I have here two pledges that I shall yet slay Moby Dick and survive it."

"Take another pledge, old man," said the Parsee, as his eyes lighted up like fire-flies in the gloom—"Hemp only can kill thee."

"The gallows, ye mean.—I am immortal then, on land and on sea," cried Ahab, with a laugh of decision;—"Immortal on land and on sea!"

Both were silent again, as one man. The grey dawn came on, and the slumbering crew arose from the boat's bottom, and ere noon the dead whale was brought to the ship.

CHAPTER 118

THE QUADRANT

The season for the Line at length drew near; and every day when Ahab, coming from his cabin, cast his eyes aloft, the vigilant helmsman would ostentatiously handle his spokes, and the eager mariners quickly run to the braces, and would stand there with all their eyes centrally fixed on the nailed doubloon; impatient for the order to point the ship's prow for the equator. In good time the order came. It was hard upon high noon; and Ahab, seated in the bows of his high-hoisted boat, was about taking his wonted daily observation of the sun to determine his latitude.

Now, sometimes, in that Japanese sea, the days in summer are as freshets of effulgences. That unblinkingly vivid Japanese sun seems the blazing focus of the glassy ocean's immeasurable burning-glass. The sky looks lacquered; clouds there are none; the horizon floats; and this nakedness of unrelieved radiance is as the insufferable splendors of God's throne. Well that Ahab's quadrant was furnished with colored glasses, through which to take sight of that solar fire. So, swinging his seated form to the roll of the ship, and with his astrological-looking instrument placed to his eye, he remained in that posture for some moments to catch the precise instant when the sun should gain its precise meridian. Meantime while his whole attention was absorbed, the Parsee was kneeling beneath him on the ship's deck, and with face thrown up like Ahab's, was eyeing the same sun with him; only the lids of his eyes half hooded their orbs, and his wild face was subdued to an unearthly passionlessness. At length the desired observation was taken; and with his pencil upon his ivory leg, Ahab soon calculated what his latitude must be at that precise instant. Then falling into a moment's revery, he again looked up towards the sun and murmured to himself: "Thou sea-mark! thou high and mighty Pilot! thou tellest me truly where I *am*—but canst thou cast the least hint where I *shall* be? Or canst thou tell where some other thing besides me is this moment living? Where is Moby Dick? This instant thou must be eyeing him. These eyes of mine look into the very eye that is even now beholding him; aye, and into the eye that is even now equally beholding the objects on the unknown, thither side of thee, thou sun!"

Then gazing at his quadrant, and handling, one after the other, its numerous cabalistical contrivances, he pondered again, and muttered: "Foolish toy!

babies' plaything of haughty Admirals, and Commodores, and Captains; the world brags of thee, of thy cunning and might; but what after all canst thou do, but tell the poor, pitiful point, where thou thyself happenest to be on this wide planet, and the hand that holds thee: no! not one jot more! Thou canst not tell where one drop of water or one grain of sand will be to-morrow noon; and yet with thy impotence thou insultest the sun! Science! Curse thee, thou vain toy; and cursed be all the things that cast man's eyes aloft to that heaven, whose live vividness but scorches him, as these old eyes are even now scorched with thy light, O sun! Level by nature to this earth's horizon are the glances of man's eyes; not shot from the crown of his head, as if God had meant him to gaze on his firmament. Curse thee, thou quadrant!" dashing it to the deck, "no longer will I guide my earthly way by thee; the level ship's compass, and the level dead-reckoning, by log and by line; *these* shall conduct me, and show me my place on the sea. Aye," lighting from the boat to the deck, "thus I trample on thee, thou paltry thing that feebly pointest on high; thus I split and destroy thee!"

As the frantic old man thus spoke and thus trampled with his live and dead feet, a sneering triumph that seemed meant for Ahab, and a fatalistic despair that seemed meant for himself—these passed over the mute, motionless Parsee's face. Unobserved he rose and glided away; while, awe-struck by the aspect of their commander, the seamen clustered together on the forecastle, till Ahab, troubledly pacing the deck, shouted out—"To the braces! Up helm!—square in!"

In an instant the yards swung round; and as the ship half-wheeled upon her heel, her three firm-seated graceful masts erectly poised upon her long, ribbed hull, seemed as the three Horatii[1] pirouetting on one sufficient steed.

Standing between the knight-heads, Starbuck watched the Pequod's tumultuous way, and Ahab's also, as he went lurching along the deck.

"I have sat before the dense coal fire and watched it all aglow, full of its tormented flaming life; and I have seen it wane at last, down, down, to dumbest dust. Old man of oceans! of all this fiery life of thine, what will at length remain but one little heap of ashes!"

"Aye," cried Stubb, "but sea-coal ashes—mind ye that, Mr. Starbuck—sea-coal, not your common charcoal. Well, well; I heard Ahab mutter, 'Here some one thrusts these cards into these old hands of mine; swears that I must play them, and no others.' And damn me, Ahab, but thou actest right; live in the game, and die in it!"

CHAPTER 119

THE CANDLES

Warmest climes but nurse the cruellest fangs: the tiger of Bengal crouches in spiced groves of ceaseless verdure. Skies the most effulgent but basket the deadliest thunders: gorgeous Cuba knows tornadoes that never swept tame northern lands. So, too, it is, that in these resplendent Japanese seas the mariner encounters the direst of all storms, the Typhoon. It will

1. Warriors of early Rome who saved the city from invasion by defending a bridge; heroes of the popular poem "Horatius," in Thomas Babington Macaulay's *Lays of Ancient Rome* (1842).

sometimes burst from out that cloudless sky, like an exploding bomb upon a dazed and sleepy town.

Towards evening of that day, the Pequod was torn of her canvas, and bare-poled was left to fight a Typhoon which had struck her directly ahead. When darkness came on, sky and sea roared and split with the thunder, and blazed with the lightning, that showed the disabled masts fluttering here and there with the rags which the first fury of the tempest had left for its after sport.

Holding by a shroud, Starbuck was standing on the quarter-deck; at every flash of the lightning glancing aloft, to see what additional disaster might have befallen the intricate hamper there; while Stubb and Flask were directing the men in the higher hoisting and firmer lashing of the boats. But all their pains seemed naught. Though lifted to the very top of the cranes, the windward quarter boat (Ahab's) did not escape. A great rolling sea, dashing high up against the reeling ship's high tetering side, stove in the boat's bottom at the stern, and left it again, all dripping through like a sieve.

"Bad work, bad work! Mr. Starbuck," said Stubb, regarding the wreck, "but the sea will have its way. Stubb, for one, can't fight it. You see, Mr. Starbuck, a wave has such a great long start before it leaps, all round the world it runs, and then comes the spring! But as for me, all the start I have to meet it, is just across the deck here. But never mind; it's all in fun: so the old song says;"—(*sings*.)

Oh! jolly is the gale,
And a joker is the whale,
A' flourishin' his tail,—
Such a funny, sporty, gamy, jesty, joky, hoky-poky lad,
is the Ocean, oh!

The scud all a flyin',
That's his flip only foamin';
When he stirs in the spicin',—
Such a funny, sporty, gamy, jesty, joky, hoky-poky lad,
is the Ocean, oh!

Thunder splits the ships,
But he only smacks his lips,
A tastin' of this flip,—
Such a funny, sporty, gamy, jesty, joky, hoky-poky lad,
is the Ocean, oh!

"Avast Stubb," cried Starbuck, "let the Typhoon sing, and strike his harp here in our rigging; but if thou art a brave man thou wilt hold thy peace."

"But I am not a brave man; never said I was a brave man; I am a coward; and I sing to keep up my spirits. And I tell you what it is, Mr. Starbuck, there's no way to stop my singing in this world but to cut my throat. And when that's done, ten to one I sing ye the doxology[1] for a wind-up."

"Madman! look through my eyes if thou hast none of thine own."

"What! how can you see better of a dark night than anybody else, never mind how foolish?"

1. From the Greek for giving praise: hymn of praise to God. In Protestant churches, commonly the hymn "Praise God from whom all blessings flow."

"Here!" cried Starbuck, seizing Stubb by the shoulder, and pointing his hand towards the weather bow, "markest thou not that the gale comes from the eastward, the very course Ahab is to run for Moby Dick? the very course he swung to this day noon? now mark his boat there; where is that stove? In the stern-sheets, man; where he is wont to stand—his stand-point is stove, man! Now jump overboard, and sing away, if thou must!"

"I don't half understand ye: what's in the wind?"

"Yes, yes, round the Cape of Good Hope is the shortest way to Nantucket," soliloquized Starbuck suddenly, heedless of Stubb's question. "The gale that now hammers at us to stave us, we can turn it into a fair wind that will drive us towards home. Yonder, to windward, all is blackness of doom; but to leeward, homeward—I see it lightens up there; but not with the lightning."

At that moment in one of the intervals of profound darkness, following the flashes, a voice was heard at his side; and almost at the same instant a volley of thunder peals rolled overhead.

"Who's there?"

"Old Thunder!" said Ahab, groping his way along the bulwarks to his pivot-hole; but suddenly finding his path made plain to him by elbowed lances of fire.

Now, as the lightning rod to a spire on shore is intended to carry off the perilous fluid into the soil; so the kindred rod which at sea some ships carry to each mast, is intended to conduct it into the water. But as this conductor must descend to considerable depth, that its end may avoid all contact with the hull; and as moreover, if kept constantly towing there, it would be liable to many mishaps, besides interfering not a little with some of the rigging, and more or less impeding the vessel's way in the water; because of all this, the lower parts of a ship's lightning-rods are not always overboard; but are generally made in long slender links, so as to be the more readily hauled up into the chains outside, or thrown down into the sea, as occasion may require.

"The rods! the rods!" cried Starbuck to the crew, suddenly admonished to vigilance by the vivid lightning that had just been darting flambeaux, to light Ahab to his post. "Are they overboard? drop them over, fore and aft. Quick!"

"Avast!" cried Ahab; "let's have fair play here, though we be the weaker side. Yet I'll contribute to raise rods on the Himmalehs and Andes, that all the world may be secured; but out on privileges! Let them be, sir."

"Look aloft!" cried Starbuck. "The corpusants! the corpusants!"[2]

All the yard-arms were tipped with a pallid fire; and touched at each tri-pointed lightning-rod-end with three tapering white flames, each of the three tall masts was silently burning in that sulphurous air, like three gigantic wax tapers before an altar.

"Blast the boat! let it go!" cried Stubb at this instant, as a swashing sea heaved up under his own little craft, so that its gunwale violently jammed his hand, as he was passing a lashing. "Blast it!"—but slipping backward on the deck, his uplifted eyes caught the flames; and immediately shifting his tone, he cried—"The corpusants have mercy on us all!"

To sailors, oaths are household words; they will swear in the trance of the calm, and in the teeth of the tempest; they will imprecate curses from

2. Balls of electricity in a ship's rigging (commonly called St. Elmo's fire), sources of superstitious awe in sailors.

the topsail-yard-arms, when most they teter over to a seething sea; but in all my voyagings, seldom have I heard a common oath when God's burning finger has been laid on the ship; when His "Mene, Mene, Tekel, Upharsin"[3] has been woven into the shrouds and the cordage.

While this pallidness was burning aloft, few words were heard from the enchanted crew; who in one thick cluster stood on the forecastle, all their eyes gleaming in that pale phosphorescence, like a far away constellation of stars. Relieved against the ghostly light, the gigantic jet negro, Daggoo, loomed up to thrice his real stature, and seemed the black cloud from which the thunder had come. The parted mouth of Tashtego revealed his shark-white teeth, which strangely gleamed as if they too had been tipped by corpusants; while lit up by the preternatural light, Queequeg's tattooing burned like Satanic blue flames on his body.

The tableau all waned at last with the pallidness aloft; and once more the Pequod and every soul on her decks were wrapped in a pall. A moment or two passed, when Starbuck, going forward, pushed against some one. It was Stubb. "What thinkest thou now, man; I heard thy cry; it was not the same in the song."

"No, no, it wasn't; I said the corpusants have mercy on us all; and I hope they will, still. But do they only have mercy on long faces?—have they no bowels for a laugh? And look ye, Mr. Starbuck—but it's too dark to look. Hear me, then: I take that masthead flame we saw for a sign of good luck; for those masts are rooted in a hold that is going to be chock a' block with sperm-oil, d'ye see; and so, all that sperm will work up into the masts, like sap in a tree. Yes, our three masts will yet be as three spermaceti candles—that's the good promise we saw."

At that moment Starbuck caught sight of Stubb's face slowly beginning to glimmer into sight. Glancing upwards, he cried: "See! see!" and once more the high tapering flames were beheld with what seemed redoubled supernaturalness in their pallor.

"The corpusants have mercy on us all," cried Stubb, again.

At the base of the mainmast, full beneath the doubloon and the flame, the Parsee was kneeling in Ahab's front, but with his head bowed away from him; while near by, from the arched and overhanging rigging, where they had just been engaged securing a spar, a number of the seamen, arrested by the glare, now cohered together, and hung pendulous, like a knot of numbed wasps from a drooping, orchard twig. In various enchanted attitudes, like the standing, or stepping, or running skeletons in Herculaneum,[4] others remained rooted to the deck; but all their eyes upcast.

"Aye, aye, men!" cried Ahab. "Look up at it; mark it well; the white flame but lights the way to the White Whale! Hand me those main-mast links there; I would fain feel this pulse, and let mine beat against it; blood against fire! So."

Then turning—the last link held fast in his left hand, he put his foot upon the Parsee; and with fixed upward eye, and high-flung right arm, he stood erect before the lofty tri-pointed trinity of flames.

3. As in Ch. 99, cryptic words written by disembodied "fingers of a man's hand" on the wall of King Belshazzar's banquet hall (Daniel 5.25–28).
4. Roman city buried in 79 C.E. along with Pompeii. Melville, like many in the young American republic, was enthralled with news of ongoing excavations in Italy (see the reference in Ch. 86) and with historical and fictional accounts of the apocalyptic explosion of Vesuvius, such as Edward Bulwer-Lytton's *The Last Days of Pompeii* (1834).

"Oh! thou clear spirit of clear fire, whom on these seas I as Persian once did worship, till in the sacramental act so burned by thee, that to this hour I bear the scar; I now know thee, thou clear spirit, and I now know that thy right worship is defiance. To neither love nor reverence wilt thou be kind; and e'en for hate thou canst but kill; and all are killed. No fearless fool now fronts thee. I own thy speechless, placeless power; but to the last gasp of my earthquake life will dispute its unconditional, unintegral mastery in me. In the midst of the personified impersonal, a personality stands here. Though but a point at best; whencesoe'er I came; wheresoe'er I go; yet while I earthly live, the queenly personality lives in me, and feels her royal rights. But war is pain, and hate is woe. Come in thy lowest form of love, and I will kneel and kiss thee; but at thy highest, come as mere supernal power; and though thou launchest navies of full-freighted worlds, there's that in here that still remains indifferent. Oh, thou clear spirit, of thy fire thou madest me, and like a true child of fire, I breathe it back to thee."

[*Sudden, repeated flashes of lightning; the nine flames leap lengthwise to thrice their previous height; Ahab, with the rest, closes his eyes, his right hand pressed hard upon them.*]

"I own thy speechless, placeless power; said I not so? Nor was it wrung from me; nor do I now drop these links. Thou canst blind; but I can then grope. Thou canst consume; but I can then be ashes. Take the homage of these poor eyes, and shutter-hands. I would not take it. The lightning flashes through my skull; mine eye-balls ache and ache; my whole beaten brain seems as beheaded, and rolling on some stunning ground. Oh, oh! Yet blindfold, yet will I talk to thee. Light though thou be, thou leapest out of darkness; but I am darkness leaping out of light, leaping out of thee! The javelins cease; open eyes; see, or not? There burn the flames! Oh, thou magnanimous! now I do glory in my genealogy. But thou art but my fiery father; my sweet mother, I know not. Oh, cruel! what hast thou done with her? There lies my puzzle; but thine is greater. Thou knowest not how came ye, hence callest thyself unbegotten; certainly knowest not thy beginning, hence callest thyself unbegun. I know that of me, which thou knowest not of thyself, oh, thou omnipotent. There is some unsuffusing thing beyond thee, thou clear spirit, to whom all thy eternity is but time, all thy creativeness mechanical. Through thee, thy flaming self, my scorched eyes do dimly see it. Oh, thou foundling fire, thou hermit immemorial, thou too hast thy incommunicable riddle, thy unparticipated grief. Here again with haughty agony, I read my sire. Leap! leap up, and lick the sky! I leap with thee; I burn with thee; would fain be welded with thee; defyingly I worship thee!"

"The boat! the boat!" cried Starbuck, "look at thy boat, old man!"

Ahab's harpoon, the one forged at Perth's fire, remained firmly lashed in its conspicuous crotch, so that it projected beyond his whale-boat's bow; but the sea that had stove its bottom had caused the loose leather sheath to drop off; and from the keen steel barb there now came a levelled flame of pale, forked fire. As the silent harpoon burned there like a serpent's tongue, Starbuck grasped Ahab by the arm—"God, God is against thee, old man; forbear! 'tis an ill voyage! ill begun, ill continued; let me square the yards, while we may, old man, and make a fair wind of it homewards, to go on a better voyage than this."

Overhearing Starbuck, the panic-stricken crew instantly ran to the braces—though not a sail was left aloft. For the moment all the aghast mate's thoughts seemed theirs; they raised a half mutinous cry. But dashing the rattling lightning links to the deck, and snatching the burning harpoon, Ahab waved it like a torch among them; swearing to transfix with it the first sailor that but cast loose a rope's end. Petrified by his aspect, and still more shrinking from the fiery dart that he held, the men fell back in dismay, and Ahab again spoke:—

"All your oaths to hunt the White Whale are as binding as mine; and heart, soul, and body, lungs and life, old Ahab is bound. And that ye may know to what tune this heart beats; look ye here; thus I blow out the last fear!" And with one blast of his breath he extinguished the flame.

As in the hurricane that sweeps the plain, men fly the neighborhood of some lone, gigantic elm, whose very height and strength but render it so much the more unsafe, because so much the more a mark for thunderbolts; so at those last words of Ahab's many of the mariners did run from him in a terror of dismay.

CHAPTER 120

THE DECK TOWARDS THE END OF THE FIRST NIGHT WATCH

Ahab standing by the helm. Starbuck approaching him.

"We must send down the main-top-sail yard, sir. The band is working loose, and the lee lift is half-stranded. Shall I strike it, sir?"

"Strike nothing; lash it.[1] If I had sky-sail poles, I'd sway them up now."

"Sir?—in God's name!—sir?"

"Well."

"The anchors are working, sir. Shall I get them inboard?"

"Strike nothing, and stir nothing, but lash everything. The wind rises, but it has not got up to my table-lands yet. Quick, and see to it. By masts and keels! he takes me for the hunchbacked skipper of some coasting smack. Send down my main-top-sail yard! Ho, gluepots![2] Loftiest trucks were made for wildest winds, and this brain-truck of mine now sails amid the cloud-scud. Shall I strike that? Oh, none but cowards send down their brain-trucks in tempest time. What a hooroosh aloft there! I would e'en take it for sublime, did I not know that the colic is a noisy malady. Oh, take medicine, take medicine!"

CHAPTER 121

MIDNIGHT.—THE FORECASTLE BULWARKS

Stubb and Flask mounted on them, and passing additional lashings over the anchors there hanging.

"No, Stubb; you may pound that knot there as much as you please, but you will never pound into me what you were just now saying. And how

1. Ahab rejects Starbuck's suggestion that they stop and work on securing the rigging.
2. Ahab calls for the yard not to be lowered but to be made more secure (as if glued).

long ago is it since you said the very contrary? Didn't you once say that whatever ship Ahab sails in, that ship should pay something extra on its insurance policy, just as though it were loaded with powder barrels aft and boxes of lucifers forward? Stop, now; didn't you say so?"

"Well, suppose I did? What then? I've part changed my flesh since that time, why not my mind? Besides, supposing we *are* loaded with powder barrels aft and lucifers forward; how the devil could the lucifers get afire in this drenching spray here? Why, my little man, you have pretty red hair, but you couldn't get afire now. Shake yourself; you're Aquarius,[1] or the water-bearer, Flask; might fill pitchers at your coat collar. Don't you see, then, that for these extra risks the Marine Insurance companies have extra guarantees? Here are hydrants, Flask. But hark, again, and I'll answer ye the other thing. First take your leg off from the crown of the anchor here, though, so I can pass the rope; now listen. What's the mighty difference between holding a mast's lightning-rod in the storm, and standing close by a mast that hasn't got any lightning-rod at all in a storm? Don't you see, you timber-head, that no harm can come to the holder of the rod, unless the mast is first struck? What are you talking about, then? Not one ship in a hundred carries rods, and Ahab,—aye, man, and all of us,—were in no more danger then, in my poor opinion, than all the crews in ten thousand ships now sailing the seas. Why, you King-Post, you, I suppose you would have every man in the world go about with a small lightning-rod running up the corner of his hat, like a militia officer's skewered feather, and trailing behind like his sash. Why don't ye be sensible, Flask? it's easy to be sensible; why don't ye, then? any man with half an eye can be sensible."

"I don't know that, Stubb. You sometimes find it rather hard."

"Yes, when a fellow's soaked through, it's hard to be sensible, that's a fact. And I am about drenched with this spray. Never mind; catch the turn there, and pass it. Seems to me we are lashing down these anchors now as if they were never going to be used again. Tying these two anchors here, Flask, seems like tying a man's hands behind him. And what big generous hands they are, to be sure. These are your iron fists, hey? What a hold they have, too! I wonder, Flask, whether the world is anchored anywhere; if she is, she swings with an uncommon long cable, though. There, hammer that knot down, and we've done. So; next to touching land, lighting on deck is the most satisfactory. I say, just wring out my jacket skirts, will ye? Thank ye. They laugh at long-togs so, Flask; but seems to me, a long tailed coat ought always to be worn in all storms afloat. The tails tapering down that way, serve to carry off the water, d'ye see. Same with cocked hats; the cocks form gable-end eave-troughs, Flask. No more monkey-jackets and tarpaulins for me; I must mount a swallow-tail, and drive down a beaver;[2] so. Halloa! whew! there goes my tarpaulin overboard; Lord, Lord, that the winds that come from heaven should be so unmannerly! This is a nasty night, lad."

1. Flask is so wet that Stubb calls him Aquarius, the zodiacal water bearer.
2. Stubb says he must don formal wear instead of his usual monkey jacket and tarpaulin hat.

CHAPTER 122

MIDNIGHT ALOFT.—THUNDER AND LIGHTNING

The Main-top-sail yard.—Tashtego passing new lashings around it.

"Um, um, um. Stop that thunder! Plenty too much thunder up here. What's the use of thunder? Um, um, um. We don't want thunder; we want rum; give us a glass of rum. Um, um, um!"

CHAPTER 123

THE MUSKET

During the most violent shocks of the Typhoon, the man at the Pequod's jaw-bone tiller had several times been reelingly hurled to the deck by its spasmodic motions, even though preventer tackles[1] had been attached to it—for they were slack—because some play to the tiller was indispensable.

In a severe gale like this, while the ship is but a tossed shuttle-cock to the blast, it is by no means uncommon to see the needles in the compasses, at intervals, go round and round. It was thus with the Pequod's; at almost every shock the helmsman had not failed to notice the whirling velocity with which they revolved upon the cards; it is a sight that hardly any one can behold without some sort of unwonted emotion.

Some hours after midnight, the Typhoon abated so much, that through the strenuous exertions of Starbuck and Stubb—one engaged forward and the other aft—the shivered remnants of the jib and fore and main-top-sails were cut adrift from the spars, and went eddying away to leeward, like the feathers of an albatross, which sometimes are cast to the winds when that storm-tossed bird is on the wing.

The three corresponding new sails were now bent and reefed, and a storm-trysail was set further aft; so that the ship soon went through the water with some precision again; and the course—for the present, East-south-east—which he was to steer, if practicable, was once more given to the helmsman. For during the violence of the gale, he had only steered according to its vicissitudes. But as he was now bringing the ship as near her course as possible, watching the compass meanwhile, lo! a good sign! the wind seemed coming round astern; aye, the foul breeze became fair!

Instantly the yards were squared, to the lively song of "*Ho! the fair wind! oh-he-yo, cheerly, men!*" the crew singing for joy, that so promising an event should so soon have falsified the evil portents preceding it.

In compliance with the standing order of his commander—to report immediately, and at any one of the twenty-four hours, any decided change in the affairs of the deck,—Starbuck had no sooner trimmed the yards to the breeze—however reluctantly and gloomily,—than he mechanically went below to apprise Captain Ahab of the circumstance.

Ere knocking at his state-room, he involuntarily paused before it a moment. The cabin lamp—taking long swings this way and that—was

1. Supporting ropes and pulleys. The *Pequod* is said to be steered by a wheel at times, a tiller at others, as here.

burning fitfully, and casting fitful shadows upon the old man's bolted door,—a thin one, with fixed blinds inserted, in place of upper panels. The isolated subterraneousness of the cabin made a certain humming silence to reign there, though it was hooped round by all the roar of the elements. The loaded muskets in the rack were shiningly revealed, as they stood upright against the forward bulkhead. Starbuck was an honest, upright man; but out of Starbuck's heart, at that instant when he saw the muskets, there strangely evolved an evil thought; but so blent with its neutral or good accompaniments that for the instant he hardly knew it for itself.

"He would have shot me once," he murmured, "yes, there's the very musket that he pointed at me;—that one with the studded stock; let me touch it—lift it. Strange, that I, who have handled so many deadly lances, strange, that I should shake so now. Loaded? I must see. Aye, aye; and powder in the pan;—that's not good. Best spill it?—wait. I'll cure myself of this. I'll hold the musket boldly while I think.—I come to report a fair wind to him. But how fair? Fair for death and doom,—*that's* fair for Moby Dick. It's a fair wind that's only fair for that accursed fish.—The very tube he pointed at me!—the very one; *this* one—I hold it here; he would have killed me with the very thing I handle now.—Aye and he would fain kill all his crew. Does he not say he will not strike his spars to any gale? Has he not dashed his heavenly quadrant? and in these same perilous seas, gropes he not his way by mere dead reckoning of the error-abounding log? and in this very Typhoon, did he not swear that he would have no lightning-rods? But shall this crazed old man be tamely suffered to drag a whole ship's company down to doom with him?—Yes, it would make him the wilful murderer of thirty men and more, if this ship come to any deadly harm; and come to deadly harm, my soul swears this ship will, if Ahab have his way. If, then, he were this instant—put aside, that crime would not be his. Ha! is he muttering in his sleep? Yes, just there,—in there, he's sleeping. Sleeping? aye, but still alive, and soon awake again. I can't withstand thee, then, old man. Not reasoning; not remonstrance; not entreaty wilt thou hearken to; all this thou scornest. Flat obedience to thy own flat commands, this is all thou breathest. Aye, and say'st the men have vow'd thy vow; say'st all of us are Ahabs. Great God forbid!—But is there no other way? no lawful way?—Make him a prisoner to be taken home? What! hope to wrest this old man's living power from his own living hands? Only a fool would try it. Say he were pinioned even; knotted all over with ropes and hawsers; chained down to ring-bolts on this cabin floor; he would be more hideous than a caged tiger, then. I could not endure the sight; could not possibly fly his howlings; all comfort, sleep itself, inestimable reason would leave me on the long intolerable voyage. What, then, remains? The land is hundreds of leagues away, and locked Japan the nearest. I stand alone here upon an open sea, with two oceans and a whole continent between me and law.—Aye, aye, 'tis so.—Is heaven a murderer when its lightning strikes a would-be murderer in his bed, tindering sheets and skin together?—And would I be a murderer, then, if——" and slowly, stealthily, and half sideways looking, he placed the loaded musket's end against the door.

"On this level, Ahab's hammock swings within; his head this way. A touch, and Starbuck may survive to hug his wife and child again.—Oh Mary! Mary!—boy! boy! boy!—But if I wake thee not to death, old man, who can tell to what unsounded deeps Starbuck's body this day week may

sink, with all the crew! Great God, where art thou? Shall I? shall I?—— The wind has gone down and shifted, sir; the fore and main topsails are reefed and set; she heads her course."

"Stern all! Oh Moby Dick, I clutch thy heart at last!"

Such were the sounds that now came hurtling from out the old man's tormented sleep, as if Starbuck's voice had caused the long dumb dream to speak.

The yet levelled musket shook like a drunkard's arm against the panel; Starbuck seemed wrestling with an angel;[2] but turning from the door, he placed the death-tube in its rack, and left the place.

"He's too sound asleep, Mr. Stubb; go thou down, and wake him, and tell him. I must see to the deck here. Thou know'st what to say."

CHAPTER 124

THE NEEDLE[1]

Next morning the not-yet-subsided sea rolled in long slow billows of mighty bulk, and striving in the Pequod's gurgling track, pushed her on like giants' palms outspread. The strong, unstaggering breeze abounded so, that sky and air seemed vast out-bellying sails; the whole world boomed before the wind. Muffled in the full morning light, the invisible sun was only known by the spread intensity of his place; where his bayonet rays moved on in stacks. Emblazonings, as of crowned Babylonian kings and queens, reigned over everything. The sea was as a crucible of molten gold, that bubblingly leaps with light and heat.

Long maintaining an enchanted silence, Ahab stood apart; and every time the tetering ship loweringly pitched down her bowsprit, he turned to eye the bright sun's rays produced ahead; and when she profoundly settled by the stern, he turned behind, and saw the sun's rearward place, and how the same yellow rays were blending with his undeviating wake.

"Ha, ha, my ship! thou mightest well be taken now for the sea-chariot of the sun. Ho, ho! all ye nations before my prow, I bring the sun to ye! Yoke on the further billows; hallo! a tandem, I drive the sea!"

But suddenly reined back by some counter thought, he hurried towards the helm, huskily demanding how the ship was heading.

"East-sou-east, sir," said the frightened steersman.

"Thou liest!" smiting him with his clenched fist. "Heading East at this hour in the morning, and the sun astern?"

Upon this every soul was confounded; for the phenomenon just then observed by Ahab had unaccountably escaped every one else; but its very blinding palpableness must have been the cause.

Thrusting his head half way into the binnacle, Ahab caught one glimpse of the compasses; his uplifted arm slowly fell; for a moment he almost seemed to stagger. Standing behind him Starbuck looked, and lo! the two compasses pointed East, and the Pequod was as infallibly going West.

2. Jacob wrestled until daylight with an angel in Genesis 32.24–32. Here, Starbuck resists an apparently evil angel who tempts him to shoot Ahab.

1. Melville "built up" this chapter from Scoresby's *Journal of a Voyage to the Northern Whale-Fishery* (1823), according to Mansfield and Vincent (p. 823).

But ere the first wild alarm could get out abroad among the crew, the old man with a rigid laugh exclaimed, "I have it! It has happened before. Mr. Starbuck, last night's thunder turned our compasses—that's all. Thou hast before now heard of such a thing, I take it."

"Aye; but never before has it happened to me, sir," said the pale mate, gloomily.

Here, it must needs be said, that accidents like this have in more than one case occurred to ships in violent storms. The magnetic energy, as developed in the mariner's needle, is, as all know, essentially one with the electricity beheld in heaven; hence it is not to be much marvelled at, that such things should be. In instances where the lightning has actually struck the vessel, so as to smite down some of the spars and rigging, the effect upon the needle has at times been still more fatal; all its loadstone virtue being annihilated, so that the before magnetic steel was of no more use than an old wife's knitting needle. But in either case, the needle never again, of itself, recovers the original virtue thus marred or lost; and if the binnacle compasses be affected, the same fate reaches all the others that may be in the ship; even were the lowermost one inserted into the kelson.

Deliberately standing before the binnacle, and eyeing the trans-pointed compasses, the old man, with the sharp of his extended hand, now took the precise bearing of the sun, and satisfied that the needles were exactly inverted, shouted out his orders for the ship's course to be changed accordingly. The yards were braced hard up; and once more the Pequod thrust her undaunted bows into the opposing wind, for the supposed fair one had only been juggling[2] her.

Meanwhile, whatever were his own secret thoughts, Starbuck said nothing, but quietly he issued all requisite orders; while Stubb and Flask—who in some small degree seemed then to be sharing his feelings—likewise unmurmuringly acquiesced. As for the men, though some of them lowly rumbled, their fear of Ahab was greater than their fear of Fate. But as ever before, the pagan harpooneers remained almost wholly unimpressed; or if impressed, it was only with a certain magnetism shot into their congenial hearts from inflexible Ahab's.

For a space the old man walked the deck in rolling reveries. But chancing to slip with his ivory heel, he saw the crushed copper sight-tubes of the quadrant he had the day before dashed to the deck.

"Thou poor, proud heaven-gazer and sun's pilot! yesterday I wrecked thee, and to-day the compasses would fain have wrecked me. So, so. But Ahab is lord over the level loadstone[3] yet. Mr. Starbuck—a lance without the pole; a top-maul, and the smallest of the sail-maker's needles. Quick!"

Accessory, perhaps, to the impulse dictating the thing he was now about to do, were certain prudential motives, whose object might have been to revive the spirits of his crew by a stroke of his subtile skill, in a matter so wondrous as that of the inverted compasses. Besides, the old man well knew that to steer by transpointed needles, though clumsily practicable, was not a thing to be passed over by superstitious sailors, without some shudderings and evil portents.

"Men," said he, steadily turning upon the crew, as the mate handed him the things he had demanded, "my men, the thunder turned old Ahab's

2. Tricking (as in the juggling fiends who are no more to be believed, *Macbeth* 5.8.19).
3. Ahab boasts that he can make the magnetic compass (loadstone) obey him.

needles; but out of this bit of steel Ahab can make one of his own, that will point as true as any."

Abashed glances of servile wonder were exchanged by the sailors, as this was said; and with fascinated eyes they awaited whatever magic might follow. But Starbuck looked away.

With a blow from the top-maul Ahab knocked off the steel head of the lance, and then handing to the mate the long iron rod remaining, bade him hold it upright, without its touching the deck. Then, with the maul, after repeatedly smiting the upper end of this iron rod, he placed the blunted needle endwise on the top of it, and less strongly hammered that, several times, the mate still holding the rod as before. Then going through some small strange motions with it—whether indispensable to the magnetizing of the steel, or merely intended to augment the awe of the crew, is uncertain—he called for linen thread; and moving to the binnacle, slipped out the two reversed needles there, and horizontally suspended the sail-needle by its middle, over one of the compass-cards. At first, the steel went round and round, quivering and vibrating at either end; but at last it settled to its place, when Ahab, who had been intently watching for this result, stepped frankly back from the binnacle, and pointing his stretched arm towards it, exclaimed,—"Look ye, for yourselves, if Ahab be not lord of the level loadstone! The sun is East, and that compass swears it!"

One after another they peered in, for nothing but their own eyes could persuade such ignorance as theirs, and one after another they slunk away.

In his fiery eyes of scorn and triumph, you then saw Ahab in all his fatal pride.

CHAPTER 125

THE LOG AND LINE

While now the fated Pequod had been so long afloat this voyage, the log and line had but very seldom been in use. Owing to a confident reliance upon other means of determining the vessel's place, some merchantmen, and many whalemen, especially when cruising, wholly neglect to heave the log; though at the same time, and frequently more for form's sake than anything else, regularly putting down upon the customary slate the course steered by the ship, as well as the presumed average rate of progression every hour. It had been thus with the Pequod. The wooden reel and angular log attached hung, long untouched, just beneath the railing of the after bulwarks. Rains and spray had damped it; sun and wind had warped it; all the elements had combined to rot a thing that hung so idly. But heedless of all this, his mood seized Ahab, as he happened to glance upon the reel, not many hours after the magnet scene, and he remembered how his quadrant was no more, and recalled his frantic oath about the level log and line. The ship was sailing plungingly; astern the billows rolled in riots.

"Forward, there! Heave the log!"

Two seamen came. The golden-hued Tahitian and the grizzly Manxman. "Take the reel, one of ye, I'll heave."

They went towards the extreme stern, on the ship's lee side, where the deck, with the oblique energy of the wind, was now almost dipping into the creamy, sidelong-rushing sea.

The Manxman took the reel, and holding it high up, by the projecting handle-ends of the spindle, round which the spool of line revolved, so stood with the angular log hanging downwards, till Ahab advanced to him.

Ahab stood before him, and was lightly unwinding some thirty or forty turns to form a preliminary hand-coil to toss overboard, when the old Manxman, who was intently eyeing both him and the line, made bold to speak.

"Sir, I mistrust it; this line looks far gone, long heat and wet have spoiled it."

"'Twill hold, old gentleman. Long heat and wet, have they spoiled thee? Thou seem'st to hold. Or, truer perhaps, life holds thee; not thou it."

"I hold the spool, sir. But just as my captain says. With these grey hairs of mine 'tis not worth while disputing, 'specially with a superior, who'll ne'er confess."

"What's that? There now's a patched professor in Queen Nature's granite-founded College; but methinks he's too subservient. Where wert thou born?"

"In the little rocky Isle of Man, sir."

"Excellent! Thou'st hit the world by that."

"I know not, sir, but I was born there."

"In the Isle of Man, hey? Well, the other way, it's good. Here's a man from Man; a man born in once independent Man, and now unmanned of Man; which is sucked in—by what? Up with the reel! The dead, blind wall butts all inquiring heads at last. Up with it! So."

The log was heaved. The loose coils rapidly straightened out in a long dragging line astern, and then, instantly, the reel began to whirl. In turn, jerkingly raised and lowered by the rolling billows, the towing resistance of the log caused the old reelman to stagger strangely.

"Hold hard!"

Snap! the overstrained line sagged down in one long festoon; the tugging log was gone.

"I crush the quadrant, the thunder turns the needles, and now the mad sea parts the log-line. But Ahab can mend all. Haul in here, Tahitian; reel up, Manxman. And look ye, let the carpenter make another log, and mend thou the line. See to it."

"There he goes now; to him nothing's happened; but to me, the skewer seems loosening out of the middle of the world. Haul in, haul in, Tahitian! These lines run whole, and whirling out: come in broken, and dragging slow. Ha, Pip? come to help; eh, Pip?"

"Pip? whom call ye Pip? Pip jumped from the whale-boat. Pip's missing. Let's see now if ye haven't fished him up here, fisherman. It drags hard; I guess he's holding on. Jerk him, Tahiti! Jerk him off; we haul in no cowards here. Ho! there's his arm just breaking water. A hatchet! a hatchet! cut it off—we haul in no cowards here. Captain Ahab! sir, sir! here's Pip, trying to get on board again."

"Peace, thou crazy loon," cried the Manxman, seizing him by the arm. "Away from the quarter-deck!"

"The greater idiot ever scolds the lesser," muttered Ahab, advancing. "Hands off from that holiness! Where sayest thou Pip was, boy?"

"Astern there, sir, astern! Lo, lo!"

"And who art thou, boy? I see not my reflection in the vacant pupils of thy eyes. Oh God! that man should be a thing for immortal souls to sieve through! Who art thou, boy?"

"Bell-boy, sir; ship's-crier;[1] ding, dong, ding! Pip! Pip! Pip! Reward for Pip! one hundred pounds of clay; five feet high—looks cowardly—quickest known by that! Ding, dong, ding! Who's seen Pip the coward?"

"There can be no hearts above the snow-line. Oh, ye frozen heavens! look down here. Ye did beget this luckless child, and have abandoned him, ye creative libertines. Here, boy; Ahab's cabin shall be Pip's home henceforth, while Ahab lives. Thou touchest my inmost centre, boy; thou art tied to me by cords woven of my heart-strings. Come, let's down."

"What's this? here's velvet shark-skin," intently gazing at Ahab's hand, and feeling it. "Ah, now, had poor Pip but felt so kind a thing as this, perhaps he had ne'er been lost! This seems to me, sir, as a man-rope; something that weak souls may hold by. Oh, sir, let old Perth now come and rivet these two hands together; the black one with the white, for I will not let this go."

"Oh, boy, nor will I thee, unless I should thereby drag thee to worse horrors than are here. Come, then, to my cabin. Lo! ye believers in gods all goodness, and in man all ill, lo you! see the omniscient gods oblivious of suffering man; and man, though idiotic, and knowing not what he does, yet full of the sweet things of love and gratitude. Come! I feel prouder leading thee by thy black hand, than though I grasped an Emperor's!"

"There go two daft ones now," muttered the old Manxman. "One daft with strength, the other daft with weakness. But here's the end of the rotten line—all dripping, too. Mend it, eh? I think we had best have a new line altogether. I'll see Mr. Stubb about it."

CHAPTER 126

THE LIFE-BUOY

Steering now south-eastward by Ahab's levelled steel, and her progress solely determined by Ahab's level log and line; the Pequod held on her path towards the Equator. Making so long a passage through such unfrequented waters, descrying no ships, and ere long, sideways impelled by unvarying trade winds, over waves monotonously mild; all these seemed the strange calm things preluding some riotous and desperate scene.

At last, when the ship drew near to the outskirts, as it were, of the Equatorial fishing-ground, and in the deep darkness that goes before the dawn, was sailing by a cluster of rocky islets; the watch—then headed by Flask—was startled by a cry so plaintively wild and unearthly—like half-articulated wailings of the ghosts of all Herod's murdered Innocents[1]—that one and all, they started from their reveries, and for the space of some moments stood, or sat, or leaned all transfixedly listening, like the carved Roman slave,[2] while that wild cry remained within hearing. The Christian

1. Like the official hired to "cry" (call out) news in a town.
1. The male children two years old or younger whom King Herod slew "in Bethlehem, and in all coasts thereof" in his attempt to kill the young Jesus (Matthew 2.16). Mansfield and Vincent (p. 824) point out that "the episode of the seal cry" was developed from Colnett's *A Voyage to the South Atlantic and Round Cape Horn* (1798).
2. In London, Melville could have seen a cast of this famous statue, which is in the Tribuno of the Uffizi Museum, in Florence, Italy.

or civilized part of the crew said it was mermaids, and shuddered; but the pagan harpooneers remained unappalled. Yet the grey Manxman—the oldest mariner of all—declared that the wild thrilling sounds that were heard, were the voices of newly drowned men in the sea.

Below in his hammock, Ahab did not hear of this till grey dawn, when he came to the deck; it was then recounted to him by Flask, not unaccompanied with hinted dark meanings. He hollowly laughed, and thus explained the wonder.

Those rocky islands the ship had passed were the resort of great numbers of seals, and some young seals that had lost their dams, or some dams that had lost their cubs, must have risen nigh the ship and kept company with her, crying and sobbing with their human sort of wail. But this only the more affected some of them, because most mariners cherish a very superstitious feeling about seals, arising not only from their peculiar tones when in distress, but also from the human look of their round heads and semi-intelligent faces, seen peeringly uprising from the water alongside. In the sea, under certain circumstances, seals have more than once been mistaken for men.

But the bodings of the crew were destined to receive a most plausible confirmation in the fate of one of their number that morning. At sun-rise this man went from his hammock to his mast-head at the fore; and whether it was that he was not yet half waked from his sleep (for sailors sometimes go aloft in a transition state), whether it was thus with the man, there is now no telling; but, be that as it may, he had not been long at his perch, when a cry was heard—a cry and a rushing—and looking up, they saw a falling phantom in the air; and looking down, a little tossed heap of white bubbles in the blue of the sea.

The life-buoy—a long slender cask—was dropped from the stern, where it always hung obedient to a cunning spring; but no hand rose to seize it, and the sun having long beat upon this cask it had shrunken, so that it slowly filled, and the parched wood also filled at its every pore; and the studded iron-bound cask followed the sailor to the bottom, as if to yield him his pillow, though in sooth but a hard one.

And thus the first man of the Pequod that mounted the mast to look out for the White Whale, on the White Whale's own peculiar ground; that man was swallowed up in the deep. But few, perhaps, thought of that at the time. Indeed, in some sort, they were not grieved at this event, at least as a portent; for they regarded it, not as a foreshadowing of evil in the future, but as the fulfilment of an evil already presaged. They declared that now they knew the reason of those wild shrieks they had heard the night before. But again the old Manxman said nay.

The lost life-buoy was now to be replaced; Starbuck was directed to see to it; but as no cask of sufficient lightness could be found, and as in the feverish eagerness of what seemed the approaching crisis of the voyage, all hands were impatient of any toil but what was directly connected with its final end, whatever that might prove to be; therefore, they were going to leave the ship's stern unprovided with a buoy, when by certain strange signs and inuendoes Queequeg hinted a hint concerning his coffin.

"A life-buoy of a coffin!" cried Starbuck, starting.

"Rather queer, that, I should say," said Stubb.

"It will make a good enough one," said Flask, "the carpenter here can arrange it easily."

"Bring it up; there's nothing else for it," said Starbuck, after a melancholy pause. "Rig it, carpenter; do not look at me so—the coffin, I mean. Dost thou hear me? Rig it."

"And shall I nail down the lid, sir?" moving his hand as with a hammer.

"Aye."

"And shall I caulk the seams, sir?" moving his hand as with a caulking-iron.

"Aye."

"And shall I then pay over the same with pitch, sir?" moving his hand as with a pitch-pot.

"Away! what possesses thee to this? Make a life-buoy of the coffin, and no more.—Mr. Stubb, Mr. Flask, come forward with me."

"He goes off in a huff. The whole he can endure; at the parts he baulks. Now I don't like this. I make a leg for Captain Ahab, and he wears it like a gentleman; but I make a bandbox for Queequeg, and he wont put his head into it. Are all my pains to go for nothing with that coffin? And now I'm ordered to make a life-buoy of it. It's like turning an old coat; going to bring the flesh on the other side now. I don't like this cobbling sort of business—I don't like it at all; it's undignified; it's not my place. Let tinkers' brats do tinkerings; we are their betters. I like to take in hand none but clean, virgin, fair-and-square mathematical jobs, something that regularly begins at the beginning, and is at the middle when midway, and comes to an end at the conclusion; not a cobbler's job, that's at an end in the middle, and at the beginning at the end. It's the old woman's tricks to be giving cobbling jobs. Lord! what an affection all old women have for tinkers. I know an old woman of sixty-five who ran away with a bald-headed young tinker once. And that's the reason I never would work for lonely widow old women ashore, when I kept my job-shop in the Vineyard; they might have taken it into their lonely old heads to run off with me. But heigh-ho! there are no caps at sea but snow-caps.[3] Let me see. Nail down the lid; caulk the seams; pay over the same with pitch; batten them down tight, and hang it with the snap-spring over the ship's stern. Were ever such things done before with a coffin? Some superstitious old carpenters, now, would be tied up in the rigging,[4] ere they would do the job. But I'm made of knotty Aroostook[5] hemlock; I don't budge. Cruppered[6] with a coffin! Sailing about with a grave-yard tray! But never mind. We workers in woods make bridal-bedsteads and card-tables, as well as coffins and hearses. We work by the month, or by the job, or by the profit; not for us to ask the why and wherefore of our work, unless it be too confounded cobbling, and then we stash it if we can. Hem! I'll do the job, now, tenderly. I'll have me—let's see—how many in the ship's company, all told? But I've forgotten. Any way, I'll have me thirty separate, Turk's-headed lifelines,[7] each three feet long hanging all round to the coffin. Then, if the hull go down, there'll be thirty lively fellows all fighting for one coffin, a sight not seen very often beneath the sun! Come hammer, calking-iron, pitch-pot, and marling-spike! Let's to it."

3. At sea, no old woman could "set her cap" for him.
4. Punished thus for refusing to make a coffin.
5. County in northern Maine.
6. The crupper is the rear part of a horse's harness.
7. Ropes ending in large tight elaborate knots, for good grasping.

CHAPTER 127

THE DECK

The coffin laid upon two line-tubs, between the vice-bench and the open hatchway; the Carpenter calking its seams; the string of twisted oakum slowly unwinding from a large roll of it placed in the bosom of his frock.—Ahab comes slowly from the cabin-gangway, and hears Pip following him.

"Back, lad; I will be with ye again presently. He goes! Not this hand complies with my humor more genially than that boy.—Middle aisle of a church![1] What's here?"

"Life-buoy, sir. Mr. Starbuck's orders. Oh, look, sir! Beware the hatchway!"

"Thank ye, man. Thy coffin lies handy to the vault."

"Sir? The hatchway? oh! So it does, sir, so it does."

"Art not thou the leg-maker? Look, did not this stump come from thy shop?"

"I believe it did, sir; does the ferrule stand, sir?"

"Well enough. But art thou not also the undertaker?"

"Aye, sir; I patched up this thing here as a coffin for Queequeg; but they've set me now to turning it into something else."

"Then tell me; art thou not an arrant, all-grasping, intermeddling, monopolizing, heathenish old scamp, to be one day making legs, and the next day coffins to clap them in, and yet again lifebuoys out of those same coffins? Thou art as unprincipled as the gods, and as much of a jack-of-all-trades."

"But I do not mean anything, sir. I do as I do."

"The gods again. Hark ye, dost thou not ever sing working about a coffin? The Titans, they say, hummed snatches when chipping out the craters for volcanoes; and the grave-digger in the play sings, spade in hand.[2] Dost thou never?"

"Sing, sir? Do I sing? Oh, I'm indifferent enough, sir, for that; but the reason why the grave-digger made music must have been because there was none in his spade, sir. But the calking mallet is full of it. Hark to it."

"Aye, and that's because the lid there's a sounding-board; and what in all things makes the sounding-board is this—there's naught beneath. And yet, a coffin with a body in it rings pretty much the same, Carpenter. Hast thou ever helped carry a bier, and heard the coffin knock against the church-yard gate, going in?"

"Faith, sir, I've——"

"Faith? What's that?"

"Why, faith, sir, it's only a sort of exclamation-like—that's all, sir."

"Um, um; go on."

"I was about to say, sir, that——"

"Art thou a silk-worm? Dost thou spin thy own shroud out of thyself? Look at thy bosom! Despatch! and get these traps out of my sight."

1. Ahab sees the deck as the middle aisle of a church, where the coffin is placed at funerals.
2. *Hamlet* 5.1.61 (and later).

"He goes aft. That was sudden, now; but squalls come sudden in hot latitudes. I've heard that the Isle of Albemarle, one of the Gallipagos, is cut by the Equator right in the middle. Seems to me some sort of Equator cuts yon old man, too, right in his middle. He's always under the Line—fiery hot, I tell ye! He's looking this way—come, oakum; quick. Here we go again. This wooden mallet is the cork, and I'm the professor of musical glasses—tap, tap!"

(Ahab to himself.)

"There's a sight! There's a sound! The greyheaded woodpecker tapping the hollow tree! Blind and deaf might well be envied now. See! that thing rests on two line-tubs, full of tow-lines. A most malicious wag, that fellow. Rat-tat! So man's seconds tick! Oh! how immaterial are all materials! What things real are there, but imponderable thoughts? Here now's the very dreaded symbol of grim death, by a mere hap, made the expressive sign of the help and hope of most endangered life. A life-buoy of a coffin! Does it go further? Can it be that in some spiritual sense the coffin is, after all, but an immortality-preserver! I'll think of that. But no. So far gone am I in the dark side of earth, that its other side, the theoretic bright one, seems but uncertain twilight to me. Will ye never have done, Carpenter, with that accursed sound? I go below; let me not see that thing here when I return again. Now, then, Pip, we'll talk this over; I do suck most wondrous philosophies from thee! Some unknown conduits from the unknown worlds must empty into thee!"

CHAPTER 128

THE PEQUOD MEETS THE RACHEL[1]

Next day, a large ship, the Rachel, was descried, bearing directly down upon the Pequod, all her spars thickly clustering with men. At the time the Pequod was making good speed through the water; but as the broad-winged windward stranger shot nigh to her, the boastful sails all fell together as blank bladders that are burst, and all life fled from the smitten hull.

"Bad news; she brings bad news," muttered the old Manxman. But ere her commander, who, with trumpet to mouth, stood up in his boat; ere he could hopefully hail, Ahab's voice was heard.

"Hast seen the White Whale?"

"Aye, yesterday. Have ye seen a whale-boat adrift?"

Throttling his joy, Ahab negatively answered this unexpected question; and would then have fain boarded the stranger, when the stranger captain himself, having stopped his vessel's way, was seen descending her side. A few keen pulls, and his boat-hook soon clinched the Pequod's main-chains, and he sprang to the deck. Immediately he was recognised by Ahab for a Nantucketer he knew. But no formal salutation was exchanged.

1. The ship's name recalls Jeremiah 31.15, where *Rachel* is not used to mean the beautiful wife of Jacob but to mean (symbolically) the mother of the Hebrews: "A voice was heard in Ramah, lamentation, and bitter weeping; Rachel weeping for her children refused to be comforted for her children, because they were not."

"Where was he?—not killed!—not killed!" cried Ahab, closely advancing. "How was it?"

It seemed that somewhat late on the afternoon of the day previous, while three of the stranger's boats were engaged with a shoal of whales, which had led them some four or five miles from the ship; and while they were yet in swift chase to windward, the white hump and head of Moby Dick had suddenly loomed up out of the blue water, not very far to leeward; whereupon, the fourth rigged boat—a reserved one—had been instantly lowered in chase. After a keen sail before the wind, this fourth boat—the swiftest keeled of all—seemed to have succeeded in fastening—at least, as well as the man at the mast-head could tell anything about it. In the distance he saw the diminished dotted boat; and then a swift gleam of bubbling white water; and after that nothing more; whence it was concluded that the stricken whale must have indefinitely run away with his pursuers, as often happens. There was some apprehension, but no positive alarm, as yet. The recall signals were placed in the rigging; darkness came on; and forced to pick up her three far to windward boats—ere going in quest of the fourth one in the precisely opposite direction—the ship had not only been necessitated to leave that boat to its fate till near midnight, but, for the time, to increase her distance from it. But the rest of her crew being at last safe aboard, she crowded all sail—stunsail on stunsail—after the missing boat; kindling a fire in her try-pots for a beacon; and every other man aloft on the look-out. But though when she had thus sailed a sufficient distance to gain the presumed place of the absent ones when last seen; though she then paused to lower her spare boats to pull all around her; and not finding anything, had again dashed on; again paused, and lowered her boats; and though she had thus continued doing till day light; yet not the least glimpse of the missing keel had been seen.

The story told, the stranger Captain immediately went on to reveal his object in boarding the Pequod. He desired that ship to unite with his own in the search; by sailing over the sea some four or five miles apart, on parallel lines, and so sweeping a double horizon, as it were.

"I will wager something now," whispered Stubb to Flask, "that some one in that missing boat wore off that Captain's best coat; mayhap, his watch—he's so cursed anxious to get it back. Who ever heard of two pious whaleships cruising after one missing whale-boat in the height of the whaling season? See, Flask, only see how pale he looks—pale in the very buttons of his eyes—look—it wasn't the coat—it must have been the—"

"My boy, my own boy is among them. For God's sake—I beg, I conjure"—here exclaimed the stranger Captain to Ahab, who thus far had but icily received his petition. "For eight-and-forty hours let me charter your ship—I will gladly pay for it, and roundly pay for it—if there be no other way—for eight-and-forty hours only—only that—you must, oh, you must, and you *shall* do this thing."

"His son!" cried Stubb, "oh, it's his son he's lost! I take back the coat and watch—what says Ahab? We must save that boy."

"He's drowned with the rest on 'em, last night," said the old Manx sailor standing behind them; "I heard; all of ye heard their spirits."

Now, as it shortly turned out, what made this incident of the Rachel's the more melancholy, was the circumstance, that not only was one of the

Captain's sons among the number of the missing boat's crew; but among the number of the other boats' crews, at the same time, but on the other hand, separated from the ship during the dark vicissitudes of the chase, there had been still another son; as that for a time, the wretched father was plunged to the bottom of the cruellest perplexity; which was only solved for him by his chief mate's instinctively adopting the ordinary procedure of a whale-ship in such emergencies, that is, when placed between jeopardized but divided boats, always to pick up the majority first. But the captain, for some unknown constitutional reason, had refrained from mentioning all this, and not till forced to it by Ahab's iciness did he allude to his one yet missing boy; a little lad, but twelve years old, whose father with the earnest but unmisgiving hardihood of a Nantucketer's paternal love, had thus early sought to initiate him in the perils and wonders of a vocation almost immemorially the destiny of all his race. Nor does it unfrequently occur, that Nantucket captains will send a son of such tender age away from them, for a protracted three or four years' voyage in some other ship than their own; so that their first knowledge of a whaleman's career shall be unenervated by any chance display of a father's natural but untimely partiality, or undue apprehensiveness and concern.

Meantime, now the stranger was still beseeching his poor boon of Ahab; and Ahab still stood like an anvil, receiving every shock, but without the least quivering of his own.

"I will not go," said the stranger, "till you say *aye* to me. Do to me as you would have me do to you in the like case.[2] For *you* too have a boy, Captain Ahab—though but a child, and nestling safely at home now—a child of your old age too—Yes, yes, you relent; I see it—run, run, men, now, and stand by to square in the yards."

"Avast," cried Ahab—"touch not a rope-yarn;" then in a voice that prolongingly moulded every word—"Captain Gardiner, I will not do it. Even now I lose time. Good bye, good bye. God bless ye, man, and may I forgive myself, but I must go. Mr. Starbuck, look at the binnacle watch, and in three minutes from this present instant warn off all strangers: then brace forward again, and let the ship sail as before."

Hurriedly turning, with averted face, he descended into his cabin, leaving the strange captain transfixed at this unconditional and utter rejection of his so earnest suit. But starting from his enchantment, Gardiner silently hurried to the side; more fell than stepped into his boat, and returned to his ship.

Soon the two ships diverged their wakes; and long as the strange vessel was in view, she was seen to yaw hither and thither at every dark spot, however small, on the sea. This way and that her yards were swung round; starboard and larboard, she continued to tack; now she beat against a head sea; and again it pushed her before it; while all the while, her masts and yards were thickly clustered with men, as three tall cherry trees, when the boys are cherrying among the boughs.

2. As Jesus said (Matthew 7.12): "Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets"; also Luke 6.31: "And as ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise."

But by her still halting course and winding, woful way, you plainly saw that this ship that so wept with spray, still remained without comfort. She was Rachel, weeping for her children,[3] because they were not.

CHAPTER 129

THE CABIN

(Ahab moving to go on deck; Pip catches him by the hand to follow.)

"Lad, lad, I tell thee thou must not follow Ahab now. The hour is coming when Ahab would not scare thee from him, yet would not have thee by him. There is that in thee, poor lad, which I feel too curing to my malady. Like cures like;[1] and for this hunt, my malady becomes my most desired health. Do thou abide below here, where they shall serve thee, as if thou wert the captain. Aye, lad, thou shalt sit here in my own screwed chair; another screw to it, thou must be."

"No, no, no! ye have not a whole body, sir; do ye but use poor me for your one lost leg; only tread upon me, sir; I ask no more, so I remain a part of ye."

"Oh! spite of million villains, this makes me a bigot[2] in the fadeless fidelity of man!—and a black! and crazy!—but methinks like-cures-like applies to him too; he grows so sane again."

"They tell me, sir, that Stubb did once desert poor little Pip, whose drowned bones now show white, for all the blackness of his living skin. But I will never desert ye, sir, as Stubb did him. Sir, I must go with ye."

"If thou speakest thus to me much more, Ahab's purpose keels up in him. I tell thee no; it cannot be."

"Oh good master, master, master!"

"Weep so, and I will murder thee! have a care, for Ahab too is mad. Listen, and thou wilt often hear my ivory foot upon the deck, and still know that I am there. And now I quit thee. Thy hand!—Met! True art thou, lad, as the circumference to its centre. So: God for ever bless thee; and if it come to that,—God for ever save thee, let what will befall."

(Ahab goes; Pip steps one step forward.)

"Here he this instant stood; I stand in his air,—but I'm alone. Now were even poor Pip here I could endure it, but he's missing. Pip! Pip! Ding, dong, ding! Who's seen Pip? He must be up here; let's try the door. What? neither lock, nor bolt, nor bar; and yet there's no opening it. It must be the spell; he told me to stay here: Aye, and told me this screwed chair was mine. Here, then, I'll seat me, against the transom, in the ship's full middle, all her keel and her three masts before me. Here, our old sailors say, in their black seventy-fours[3] great admirals sometimes sit at table, and lord it over rows of captains and lieutenants. Ha! what's this? epaulets! epaulets! the epaulets all come crowding! Pass round the decanters;

3. See Matthew 2.18, where Jeremiah's prophesy is quoted as being fulfilled by Herod's slaughter of the male children two years old or younger (as referred to in Ch. 126).

1. A reference to homeopathy, the medical system in which "like cures like" is a basic tenet.
2. A fanatical believer.
3. Great warships mounting seventy-four cannons.

glad to see ye; fill up, monsieurs! What an odd feeling, now, when a black boy's host to white men with gold lace upon their coats!—Monsieurs, have ye seen one Pip?—a little negro lad, five feet high, hang-dog look, and cowardly! Jumped from a whale-boat once;—seen him? No! Well then, fill up again, captains, and let's drink shame upon all cowards! I name no names. Shame upon them! Put one foot upon the table. Shame upon all cowards.—Hist! above there, I hear ivory—Oh, master! master! I am indeed down hearted when you walk over me. But here I'll stay, though this stern strikes rocks; and they bulge through; and oysters come to join me."

CHAPTER 130

THE HAT

And now that at the proper time and place, after so long and wide a preliminary cruise, Ahab,—all other whaling waters swept—seemed to have chased his foe into an ocean-fold, to slay him the more securely there; now, that he found himself hard by the very latitude and longitude where his tormenting wound had been inflicted; now that a vessel had been spoken which on the very day preceding had actually encountered Moby Dick;—and now that all his successive meetings with various ships contrastingly concurred to show the demoniac indifference with which the white whale tore his hunters, whether sinning or sinned against; now it was that there lurked a something in the old man's eyes, which it was hardly sufferable for feeble souls to see. As the unsetting polar star, which through the livelong, arctic, six months' night sustains its piercing, steady, central gaze; so Ahab's purpose now fixedly gleamed down upon the constant midnight of the gloomy crew. It domineered above them so, that all their bodings, doubts, misgivings, fears, were fain to hide beneath their souls, and not sprout forth a single spear or leaf.

In this foreshadowing interval too, all humor, forced or natural, vanished. Stubb no more strove to raise a smile; Starbuck no more strove to check one. Alike, joy and sorrow, hope and fear, seemed ground to finest dust, and powdered, for the time, in the clamped mortar of Ahab's iron soul. Like machines, they dumbly moved about the deck, ever conscious that the old man's despot eye was on them.

But did you deeply scan him in his more secret confidential hours; when he thought no glance but one was on him; then you would have seen that even as Ahab's eyes so awed the crew's, the inscrutable Parsee's glance awed his; or somehow, at least, in some wild way, at times affected it. Such an added, gliding strangeness began to invest the thin Fedallah now; such ceaseless shudderings shook him; that the men looked dubious at him; half uncertain, as it seemed, whether indeed he were a mortal substance, or else a tremulous shadow cast upon the deck by some unseen being's body. And that shadow was always hovering there. For not by night, even, had Fedallah ever certainly been known to slumber, or go below. He would stand still for hours: but never sat or leaned; his wan but wondrous eyes did plainly say—We two watchmen never rest.

Nor, at any time, by night or day could the mariners now step upon the deck, unless Ahab was before them; either standing in his pivot-hole, or

exactly pacing the planks between two undeviating limits,—the main-mast and the mizen; or else they saw him standing in the cabin-scuttle,—his living foot advanced upon the deck, as if to step; his hat slouched heavily over his eyes; so that however motionless he stood, however the days and nights were added on, that he had not swung in his hammock; yet hidden beneath that slouching hat, they could never tell unerringly whether, for all this, his eyes were really closed at times: or whether he was still intently scanning them; no matter, though he stood so in the scuttle for a whole hour on the stretch, and the unheeded night-damp gathered in beads of dew upon that stone-carved coat and hat. The clothes that the night had wet, the next day's sunshine dried upon him; and so, day after day, and night after night; he went no more beneath the planks; whatever he wanted from the cabin that thing he sent for.

He ate in the same open air; that is, his two only meals,—breakfast and dinner: supper he never touched; nor reaped his beard; which darkly grew all gnarled, as unearthed roots of trees blown over, which still grow idly on at naked base, though perished in the upper verdure. But though his whole life was now become one watch on deck; and though the Parsee's mystic watch was without intermission as his own; yet these two never seemed to speak—one man to the other—unless at long intervals some passing unmomentous matter made it necessary. Though such a potent spell seemed secretly to join the twain; openly, and to the awe-struck crew, they seemed pole-like asunder. If by day they chanced to speak one word; by night, dumb men were both, so far as concerned the slightest verbal interchange. At times, for longest hours, without a single hail, they stood far parted in the starlight; Ahab in his scuttle, the Parsee by the main-mast; but still fixedly gazing upon each other; as if in the Parsee Ahab saw his forethrown shadow, in Ahab the Parsee his abandoned substance.

And yet, somehow, did Ahab—in his own proper self, as daily, hourly, and every instant, commandingly revealed to his subordinates,—Ahab seemed an independent lord; the Parsee but his slave. Still again both seemed yoked together, and an unseen tyrant driving them; the lean shade siding the solid rib. For be this Parsee what he may, all rib and keel was solid Ahab.

At the first faintest glimmering of the dawn, his iron voice was heard from aft—"Man the mast-heads!"—and all through the day, till after sunset and after twilight, the same voice every hour, at the striking of the helmsman's bell, was heard—"What d'ye see?—sharp! sharp!"

But when three or four days had slided by, after meeting the children-seeking Rachel; and no spout had yet been seen; the monomaniac old man seemed distrustful of his crew's fidelity; at least, of nearly all except the Pagan harpooneers; he seemed to doubt, even, whether Stubb and Flask might not willingly overlook the sight he sought. But if these suspicions were really his, he sagaciously refrained from verbally expressing them, however his actions might seem to hint them.

"I will have the first sight of the whale myself,"—he said. "Aye! Ahab must have the doubloon!" and with his own hands he rigged a nest of basketed bowlines; and sending a hand aloft, with a single sheaved block, to secure to the main-mast head, he received the two ends of the downward-reeved rope; and attaching one to his basket prepared a pin for the other end, in order to fasten it at the rail. This done, with that end yet in his

hand and standing beside the pin, he looked round upon his crew, sweeping from one to the other; pausing his glance long upon Daggoo, Queequeg, Tashtego; but shunning Fedallah; and then settling his firm relying eye upon the chief mate, said,—"Take the rope, sir—I give it into thy hands, Starbuck."[1] Then arranging his person in the basket, he gave the word for them to hoist him to his perch, Starbuck being the one who secured the rope at last; and afterwards stood near it. And thus, with one hand clinging round the royal mast, Ahab gazed abroad upon the sea for miles and miles,—ahead, astern, this side, and that,—within the wide expanded circle commanded at so great a height.

When in working with his hands at some lofty almost isolated place in the rigging, which chances to afford no foothold, the sailor at sea is hoisted up to that spot, and sustained there by the rope; under these circumstances, its fastened end on deck is always given in strict charge to some one man who has the special watch of it. Because in such a wilderness of running rigging, whose various different relations aloft cannot always be infallibly discerned by what is seen of them at the deck; and when the deck-ends of these ropes are being every few minutes cast down from the fastenings, it would be but a natural fatality, if, unprovided with a constant watchman, the hoisted sailor should by some carelessness of the crew be cast adrift and fall all swooping to the sea. So Ahab's proceedings in this matter were not unusual; the only strange thing about them seemed to be, that Starbuck, almost the one only man who had ever ventured to oppose him with anything in the slightest degree approaching to decision—one of those too, whose faithfulness on the look-out he had seemed to doubt somewhat;—it was strange, that this was the very man he should select for his watchman; freely giving his whole life into such an otherwise distrusted person's hands.

Now, the first time Ahab was perched aloft; ere he had been there ten minutes; one of those red-billed savage sea-hawks which so often fly incommodiously close round the manned mast-heads of whalemen in these latitudes; one of these birds came wheeling and screaming round his head in a maze of untrackably swift circlings. Then it darted a thousand feet straight up into the air; then spiralized downwards, and went eddying again round his head.

But with his gaze fixed upon the dim and distant horizon, Ahab seemed not to mark this wild bird; nor, indeed, would any one else have marked it much, it being no uncommon circumstance; only now almost the least heedful eye seemed to see some sort of cunning meaning in almost every sight.

"Your hat, your hat, sir!" suddenly cried the Sicilian seaman, who being posted at the mizen-mast-head, stood directly behind Ahab, though somewhat lower than his level, and with a deep gulf of air dividing them.

But already the sable wing was before the old man's eyes; the long hooked bill at his head: with a scream, the black hawk darted away with his prize.

An eagle flew thrice round Tarquin's[2] head, removing his cap to replace it, and thereupon Tanaquil, his wife, declared that Tarquin would be king

1. Ahab's speech is a submerged but blasphemous echo of Jesus' words on the cross, "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit" (Luke 23.46).
2. Legendary last king of Rome (6th century B.C.E.).

of Rome. But only by the replacing of the cap was that omen accounted good. Ahab's hat was never restored; the wild hawk flew on and on with it; far in advance of the prow: and at last disappeared; while from the point of that disappearance, a minute black spot was dimly discerned, falling from that vast height into the sea.

CHAPTER 131

THE PEQUOD MEETS THE DELIGHT

The intense Pequod sailed on; the rolling waves and days went by; the life-buoy-coffin still lightly swung; and another ship, most miserably misnamed the Delight, was descried. As she drew nigh, all eyes were fixed upon her broad beams, called shears, which, in some whaling-ships, cross the quarter-deck at the height of eight or nine feet; serving to carry the spare, unrigged, or disabled boats.

Upon the stranger's shears were beheld the shattered, white ribs, and some few splintered planks, of what had once been a whale-boat; but you now saw through this wreck, as plainly as you see through the peeled, half-unhinged, and bleaching skeleton of a horse.

"Hast seen the White Whale?"

"Look!" replied the hollow-cheeked captain from his taffrail; and with his trumpet he pointed to the wreck.

"Hast killed him?"

"The harpoon is not yet forged that will ever do that," answered the other, sadly glancing upon a rounded hammock on the deck, whose gathered sides some noiseless sailors were busy in sewing together.

"Not forged!" and snatching Perth's levelled iron from the crotch, Ahab held it out, exclaiming—"Look ye, Nantucketer; here in this hand I hold his death! Tempered in blood, and tempered by lightning are these barbs; and I swear to temper them triply in that hot place behind the fin, where the White Whale most feels his accursed life!"

"Then God keep thee, old man—see'st thou that"—pointing to the hammock—"I bury but one of five stout men, who were alive only yesterday; but were dead ere night. Only *that* one I bury; the rest were buried before they died; you sail upon their tomb." Then turning to his crew—"Are ye ready there? place the plank then on the rail, and lift the body; so, then—Oh! God"—advancing towards the hammock with uplifted hands—"may the resurrection and the life——"[1]

"Brace forward! Up helm!" cried Ahab like lightning to his men.

But the suddenly started Pequod was not quick enough to escape the sound of the splash that the corpse soon made as it struck the sea; not so quick, indeed, but that some of the flying bubbles might have sprinkled her hull with their ghostly baptism.

As Ahab now glided from the dejected Delight, the strange lifebuoy hanging at the Pequod's stern came in to conspicuous relief.

"Ha! yonder! Look yonder, men!" cried a foreboding voice in her wake. "In vain, oh, ye strangers, ye fly our sad burial; ye but turn us your taffrail to show us your coffin!"

1. A phrase from the burial service in the Anglican Book of Common Prayer (from John 11.25).

CHAPTER 132

THE SYMPHONY

It was a clear steel-blue day. The firmaments of air and sea were hardly separable in that all-pervading azure; only, the pensive air was transparently pure and soft, with a woman's look, and the robust and man-like sea heaved with long, strong, lingering swells, as Samson's chest in his sleep.[1]

Hither, and thither, on high, glided the snow-white wings of small, unspeckled birds; these were the gentle thoughts of the feminine air; but to and fro in the deeps, far down in the bottomless blue, rushed mighty leviathans, sword-fish, and sharks; and these were the strong, troubled, murderous thinkings of the masculine sea.

But though thus contrasting within, the contrast was only in shades and shadows without; those two seemed one; it was only the sex, as it were, that distinguished them.

Aloft, like a royal czar and king, the sun seemed giving this gentle air to this bold and rolling sea; even as bride to groom. And at the girdling line of the horizon, a soft and tremulous motion—most seen here at the equator—denoted the fond, throbbing trust, the loving alarms, with which the poor bride gave her bosom away.

Tied up and twisted; gnarled and knotted with wrinkles; haggardly firm and unyielding; his eyes glowing like coals, that still glow in the ashes of ruin; untottering Ahab stood forth in the clearness of the morn; lifting his splintered helmet of a brow to the fair girl's forehead of heaven.

Oh, immortal infancy, and innocency of the azure! Invisible winged creatures that frolic all round us! Sweet childhood of air and sky! how oblivious were ye of old Ahab's close-coiled woe! But so have I seen little Miriam and Martha, laughing-eyed elves, heedlessly gambol around their old sire; sporting with the circle of singed locks which grew on the marge of that burnt-out crater of his brain.

Slowly crossing the deck from the scuttle, Ahab leaned over the side, and watched how his shadow in the water sank and sank to his gaze, the more and the more that he strove to pierce the profundity. But the lovely aromas in that enchanted air did at last seem to dispel, for a moment, the cankerous thing in his soul. That glad, happy air, that winsome sky, did at last stroke and caress him; the step-mother world, so long cruel—forbidding—now threw affectionate arms round his stubborn neck, and did seem to joyously sob over him, as if over one, that however wilful and erring, she could yet find it in her heart to save and to bless. From beneath his slouched hat[2] Ahab dropped a tear into the sea; nor did all the Pacific contain such wealth as that one wee drop.

Starbuck saw the old man; saw him, how he heavily leaned over the side; and he seemed to hear in his own true heart the measureless sobbing that

1. In Judges 13, an angel tells Manoah's barren wife that she will conceive a son who will be a Nazarite, whose hair will never be cut, and who will resist the Philistine oppressors. Grown to manhood, Samson has the strength of a giant. In Judges 16, he loves the Philistine Delilah, who inveigles him into telling his secret, that his strength will go from him if his hair is cut. Overpowered after she has his hair shaved off, he is blinded by the Philistines. Melville imagines him breathing tranquilly, in all his strength. He knew John Milton's *Samson Agonistes* as well as Judges.
2. Possibly Ch. 130 was written after Ch. 132, but Ch. 20 adequately explains that lost items can be instantly replaced from spare items.

stole out of the centre of the serenity around. Careful not to touch him, or be noticed by him, he yet drew near to him, and stood there.

Ahab turned.

"Starbuck!"

"Sir."

"Oh, Starbuck! it is a mild, mild wind, and a mild looking sky. On such a day—very much such a sweetness as this—I struck my first whale—a boy-harpooneer of eighteen! Forty—forty—forty years ago!—ago! Forty years of continual whaling! forty years of privation, and peril, and stormtime! forty years on the pitiless sea! for forty years has Ahab forsaken the peaceful land, for forty years to make war on the horrors of the deep! Aye and yes, Starbuck, out of those forty years I have not spent three ashore. When I think of this life I have led; the desolation of solitude it has been; the masoned, walled-town of a Captain's exclusiveness, which admits but small entrance to any sympathy from the green country without—oh, weariness! heaviness! Guinea-coast[3] slavery of solitary command!—when I think of all this; only half-suspected, not so keenly known to me before—and how for forty years I have fed upon dry salted fare—fit emblem of the dry nourishment of my soul!—when the poorest landsman has had fresh fruit to his daily hand, and broken the world's fresh bread to my mouldy crusts—away, whole oceans away, from that young girl-wife I wedded past fifty, and sailed for Cape Horn the next day, leaving but one dent in my marriage pillow—wife? wife?—rather a widow with her husband alive! Aye, I widowed that poor girl when I married her, Starbuck; and then, the madness, the frenzy, the boiling blood and the smoking brow, with which, for a thousand lowerings old Ahab has furiously, foamingly chased his prey—more a demon than a man!—aye, aye! what a forty years' fool—fool—old fool, has old Ahab been! Why this strife of the chase? why weary, and palsy the arm at the oar, and the iron, and the lance? how the richer or better is Ahab now? Behold. Oh, Starbuck! is it not hard, that with this weary load I bear, one poor leg should have been snatched from under me? Here, brush this old hair aside; it blinds me, that I seem to weep. Locks so grey did never grow but from out some ashes! But do I look very old, so very, very old, Starbuck? I feel deadly faint, bowed, and humped, as though I were Adam, staggering beneath the piled centuries since Paradise. God! God! God!—crack my heart!—stave my brain!—mockery! mockery! bitter, biting mockery of grey hairs, have I lived enough joy to wear ye; and seem and feel thus intolerably old? Close! stand close to me, Starbuck; let me look into a human eye; it is better than to gaze into sea or sky; better than to gaze upon God. By the green land; by the bright hearth-stone! this is the magic glass, man; I see my wife and my child in thine eye. No, no; stay on board, on board!—lower not when I do; when branded Ahab gives chase to Moby Dick. That hazard shall not be thine. No, no! not with the far away home I see in that eye!"

"Oh, my Captain! my Captain! noble soul! grand old heart, after all! why should any one give chase to that hated fish! Away with me! let us fly these deadly waters! let us home! Wife and child, too, are Starbuck's—wife and child of his brotherly, sisterly, play-fellow youth; even as thine, sir, are the

3. On the west coast of Africa.

wife and child of thy loving, longing, paternal old age! Away! let us away!—this instant let me alter the course! How cheerily, how hilariously, O my Captain, would we bowl on our way to see old Nantucket again! I think, sir, they have some such mild blue days, even as this, in Nantucket."

"They have, they have. I have seen them—some summer days in the morning. About this time—yes, it is his noon nap now—the boy vivaciously wakes; sits up in bed; and his mother tells him of me, of cannibal old me; how I am abroad upon the deep, but will yet come back to dance him again."

"'Tis my Mary, my Mary herself! She promised that my boy, every morning, should be carried to the hill to catch the first glimpse of his father's sail! Yes, yes! no more! it is done! we head for Nantucket! Come, my Captain, study out the course, and let us away! See, see! the boy's face from the window! the boy's hand on the hill!"

But Ahab's glance was averted; like a blighted fruit tree he shook, and cast his last, cindered apple to the soil.

"What is it, what nameless, inscrutable, unearthly thing is it; what cozzening, hidden lord and master, and cruel, remorseless emperor commands me; that against all natural lovings and longings, I so keep pushing, and crowding, and jamming myself on all the time; recklessly making me ready to do what in my own proper, natural heart, I durst not so much as dare? Is it Ahab, Ahab?[4] Is it I, God, or who, that lifts this arm? But if the great sun move not of himself; but is as an errand-boy in heaven; nor one single star can revolve, but by some invisible power; how then can this one small heart beat; this one small brain think thoughts; unless God does that beating, does that thinking, does that living, and not I. By heaven, man, we are turned round and round in this world, like yonder windlass, and Fate is the handspike. And all the time, lo! that smiling sky, and this unsounded sea! Look! see yon Albicore! who put it into him to chase and fang that flying-fish? Where do murderers go, man! Who's to doom, when the judge himself is dragged to the bar? But it is a mild, mild wind, and a mild looking sky; and the air smells now, as if it blew from a far-away meadow; they have been making hay somewhere under the slopes of the Andes, Starbuck, and the mowers are sleeping among the new-mown hay. Sleeping? Aye, toil we how we may, we all sleep at last on the field. Sleep? Aye, and rust amid greenness; as last year's scythes flung down, and left in the half-cut swaths—Starbuck!"

But blanched to a corpse's hue with despair, the mate had stolen away.

Ahab crossed the deck to gaze over on the other side; but started at two reflected, fixed eyes in the water there. Fedallah was motionlessly leaning over the same rail.

CHAPTER 133

THE CHASE—FIRST DAY

That night, in the mid-watch, when the old man—as his wont at intervals—stepped forth from the scuttle in which he leaned, and went to his pivot-hole, he suddenly thrust out his face fiercely, snuffing up the sea air as a

4. The Harper edition reading, "Is Ahab, Ahab?" has Ahab questioning his own identity. The English edition reading, adopted here, fits the pattern, the attempts to assign responsibility for action.

sagacious ship's dog will, in drawing nigh to some barbarous isle. He declared that a whale must be near. Soon that peculiar odor, sometimes to a great distance given forth by the living sperm whale, was palpable to all the watch; nor was any mariner surprised when, after inspecting the compass, and then the dog-vane,[1] and then ascertaining the precise bearing of the odor as nearly as possible, Ahab rapidly ordered the ship's course to be slightly altered, and the sail to be shortened.

The acute policy dictating these movements was sufficiently vindicated at daybreak, by the sight of a long sleek on the sea directly and lengthwise ahead, smooth as oil, and resembling in the pleated watery wrinkles bordering it, the polished metallic-like marks of some swift tide-rip, at the mouth of a deep, rapid stream.

"Man the mast-heads! Call all hands!"

Thundering with the butts of three clubbed handspikes on the forecastle deck, Daggoo roused the sleepers with such judgment claps that they seemed to exhale from the scuttle, so instantaneously did they appear with their clothes in their hands.

"What d'ye see?" cried Ahab, flattening his face to the sky.

"Nothing, nothing, sir!" was the sound hailing down in reply.

"T'gallant sails!—stunsails! alow and aloft, and on both sides!"

All sail being set, he now cast loose the life-line, reserved for swaying him to the main royal-mast head; and in a few moments they were hoisting him thither, when, while but two thirds of the way aloft, and while peering ahead through the horizontal vacancy between the main-top-sail and top-gallant-sail, he raised a gull-like cry in the air, "There she blows!—there she blows! A hump like a snow-hill! It is Moby Dick!"

Fired by the cry which seemed simultaneously taken up by the three look-outs, the men on deck rushed to the rigging to behold the famous whale they had so long been pursuing. Ahab had now gained his final perch, some feet above the other look-outs, Tashtego standing just beneath him on the cap of the top-gallant-mast, so that the Indian's head was almost on a level with Ahab's heel. From this height the whale was now seen some mile or so ahead, at every roll of the sea revealing his high sparkling hump, and regularly jetting his silent spout into the air. To the credulous mariners it seemed the same silent spout they had so long ago beheld in the moonlit Atlantic and Indian Oceans.

"And did none of ye see it before?" cried Ahab, hailing the perched men all around him.

"I saw him almost that same instant, sir, that Captain Ahab did, and I cried out," said Tashtego.

"Not the same instant; not the same—no, the doubloon is mine, Fate reserved the doubloon for me. *I* only; none of ye could have raised the White Whale first. There she blows! There she blows!—there she blows! There again!—there again!" he cried, in long-drawn, lingering, methodic tones, attuned to the gradual prolongings of the whale's visible jets. "He's going to sound! In stunsails! Down top-gallant-sails! Stand by three boats. Mr. Starbuck, remember, stay on board, and keep the ship. Helm there! Luff, luff a point! So; steady, man, steady! There go flukes! No, no; only black water! All ready the boats there? Stand by, stand by! Lower me,

1. Small tubular flag at the masthead, like a wind sock.

Mr. Starbuck; lower, lower,—quick, quicker!" and he slid through the air to the deck.

"He is heading straight to leeward, sir," cried Stubb, "right away from us; cannot have seen the ship yet."

"Be dumb, man! Stand by the braces! Hard down the helm!—brace up! Shiver her!—shiver her! So; well that! Boats, boats!"

Soon all the boats but Starbuck's were dropped; all the boat-sails set—all the paddles plying; with rippling swiftness, shooting to leeward; and Ahab heading the onset. A pale, death-glimmer lit up Fedallah's sunken eyes; a hideous motion gnawed his mouth.

Like noiseless nautilus shells, their light prows sped through the sea; but only slowly they neared the foe. As they neared him, the ocean grew still more smooth; seemed drawing a carpet over its waves; seemed a noon-meadow, so serenely it spread. At length the breathless hunter came so nigh his seemingly unsuspecting prey, that his entire dazzling hump was distinctly visible, sliding along the sea as if an isolated thing, and continually set in a revolving ring of finest, fleecy, greenish foam. He saw the vast, involved wrinkles of the slightly projecting head beyond. Before it, far out on the soft Turkish-rugged waters, went the glistening white shadow from his broad, milky forehead, a musical rippling playfully accompanying the shade; and behind, the blue waters interchangeably flowed over into the moving valley of his steady wake; and on either hand bright bubbles arose and danced by his side. But these were broken again by the light toes of hundreds of gay fowl softly feathering the sea, alternate with their fitful flight; and like to some flag-staff rising from the painted hull of an argosy, the tall but shattered pole of a recent lance projected from the white whale's back; and at intervals one of the cloud of soft-toed fowls hovering, and to and fro skimming like a canopy over the fish, silently perched and rocked on this pole, the long tail feathers streaming like pennons.

A gentle joyousness—a mighty mildness of repose in swiftness, invested the gliding whale. Not the white bull Jupiter swimming away with ravished Europa[2] clinging to his graceful horns; his lovely, leering eyes sideways intent upon the maid; with smooth bewitching fleetness, rippling straight for the nuptial bower in Crete; not Jove, not that great majesty Supreme! did surpass the glorified White Whale as he so divinely swam.

On each soft side—coincident with the parted swell, that but once laving him, then flowed so wide away—on each bright side, the whale shed off enticings. No wonder there had been some among the hunters who namelessly transported and allured by all that serenity, had ventured to assail it; but had fatally found that quietude but the vesture of tornadoes. Yet calm, enticing calm, oh, whale! thou glidest on, to all who for the first time eye thee, no matter how many in that same way thou may'st have bejuggled and destroyed before.

And thus, through the serene tranquillities of the tropical sea, among waves whose hand-clappings were suspended by exceeding rapture, Moby Dick moved on, still withholding from sight the full terrors of his submerged trunk, entirely hiding the wrenched hideousness of his jaw. But soon the fore part of him slowly rose from the water; for an instant his

2. See p. 152, n. 9.

whole marbleized body formed a high arch, like Virginia's Natural Bridge, and warningly waving his bannered flukes in the air, the grand god revealed himself, sounded, and went out of sight. Hoveringly halting, and dipping on the wing, the white sea-fowls longingly lingered over the agitated pool that he left.

With oars apeak, and paddles down, the sheets of their sails adrift, the three boats now stilly floated, awaiting Moby Dick's reappearance.

"An hour," said Ahab, standing rooted in his boat's stern; and he gazed beyond the whale's place, towards the dim blue spaces and wide wooing vacancies to leeward. It was only an instant; for again his eyes seemed whirling round in his head as he swept the watery circle. The breeze now freshened; the sea began to swell.

"The birds!—the birds!" cried Tashtego.

In long Indian file, as when herons take wing, the white birds were now all flying towards Ahab's boat; and when within a few yards began fluttering over the water there, wheeling round and round, with joyous, expectant cries. Their vision was keener than man's; Ahab could perceive no sign in the sea. But suddenly as he peered down and down into its depths, he profoundly saw a white living spot no bigger than a white weasel, with wonderful celerity uprising, and magnifying as it rose, till it turned, and then there were plainly revealed two long crooked rows of white, glistening teeth, floating up from the undiscoverable bottom. It was Moby Dick's open mouth and scrolled jaw; his vast, shadowed bulk still half blending with the blue of the sea. The glittering mouth yawned beneath the boat like an open-doored marble tomb; and giving one sidelong sweep with his steering oar, Ahab whirled the craft aside from this tremendous apparition. Then, calling upon Fedallah to change places with him, went forward to the bows, and seizing Perth's harpoon, commanded his crew to grasp their oars and stand by to stern.

Now, by reason of this timely spinning round the boat upon its axis, its bow, by anticipation, was made to face the whale's head while yet under water. But as if perceiving this stratagem, Moby Dick, with that malicious intelligence ascribed to him, sidelingly transplanted himself, as it were, in an instant, shooting his pleated head lengthwise beneath the boat.

Through and through; through every plank and each rib, it thrilled for an instant, the whale obliquely lying on his back, in the manner of a biting shark, slowly and feelingly taking its bows full within his mouth, so that the long, narrow, scrolled lower jaw curled high up into the open air, and one of the teeth caught in a row-lock. The bluish pearl-white of the inside of the jaw was within six inches of Ahab's head, and reached higher than that. In this attitude the White Whale now shook the slight cedar as a mildly cruel cat her mouse. With unastonished eyes Fedallah gazed, and crossed his arms; but the tiger-yellow crew were tumbling over each other's heads to gain the uttermost stern.

And now, while both elastic gunwales were springing in and out, as the whale dallied with the doomed craft in this devilish way; and from his body being submerged beneath the boat, he could not be darted at from the bows, for the bows were almost inside of him, as it were; and while the other boats involuntarily paused, as before a quick crisis impossible to withstand, then it was that monomaniac Ahab, furious with this tantalizing vicinity of his foe, which placed him all alive and helpless in the

very jaws he hated; frenzied with all this, he seized the long bone with his naked hands, and wildly strove to wrench it from its gripe. As now he thus vainly strove, the jaw slipped from him; the frail gunwales bent in, collapsed, and snapped, as both jaws, like an enormous shears, sliding further aft, bit the craft completely in twain, and locked themselves fast again in the sea, midway between the two floating wrecks. These floated aside, the broken ends drooping, the crew at the stern-wreck clinging to the gunwales, and striving to hold fast to the oars to lash them across.

At that preluding moment, ere the boat was yet snapped, Ahab, the first to perceive the whale's intent, by the crafty upraising of his head, a movement that loosed his hold for the time; at that moment his hand had made one final effort to push the boat out of the bite. But only slipping further into the whale's mouth, and tilting over sideways as it slipped, the boat had shaken off his hold on the jaw; spilled him out of it, as he leaned to the push; and so he fell flat-faced upon the sea.

Ripplingly withdrawing from his prey, Moby Dick now lay at a little distance, vertically thrusting his oblong white head up and down in the billows; and at the same time slowly revolving his whole spindled body; so that when his vast wrinkled forehead rose—some twenty or more feet out of the water—the now rising swells, with all their confluent waves, dazzlingly broke against it; vindictively tossing their shivered spray still higher into the air.[3] So, in a gale, the but half baffled Channel billows only recoil from the base of the Eddystone, triumphantly to overleap its summit with their scud.

But soon resuming his horizontal attitude, Moby Dick swam swiftly round and round the wrecked crew; sideways churning the water in his vengeful wake, as if lashing himself up to still another and more deadly assault. The sight of the splintered boat seemed to madden him, as the blood of grapes and mulberries cast before Antiochus's elephants in the book of Maccabees.[4] Meanwhile Ahab half smothered in the foam of the whale's insolent tail, and too much of a cripple to swim,—though he could still keep afloat, even in the heart of such a whirlpool as that; helpless Ahab's head was seen, like a tossed bubble which the least chance shock might burst. From the boat's fragmentary stern, Fedallah incuriously and mildly eyed him; the clinging crew, at the other drifting end, could not succor him; more than enough was it for them to look to themselves. For so revolvingly appalling was the White Whale's aspect, and so planetarily swift the ever-contracting circles he made, that he seemed horizontally swooping upon them. And though the other boats, unharmed, still hovered hard by; still they dared not pull into the eddy to strike, lest that should be the signal for the instant destruction of the jeopardized castaways, Ahab and all; nor in that case could they themselves hope to escape. With straining eyes, then, they remained on the outer edge of the direful zone, whose centre had now become the old man's head.

3. This motion is peculiar to the sperm whale. It receives its designation (pitchpoling) from its being likened to that preliminary up-and-down poise of the whale-lance, in the exercise called pitchpoling, previously described. By this motion the whale must best and most comprehensively view whatever objects may be encircling him. [Melville's note.]
4. 1 Maccabees 6.34, in the Apocrypha (ancient religious books not accepted as fully canonical but sometimes printed between the Testaments or separately): "And to the end they might provoke the elephants to fight, they shewed them the blood of grapes and mulberries."

Meantime, from the beginning all this had been descried from the ship's mast heads; and squaring her yards, she had borne down upon the scene; and was now so nigh, that Ahab in the water hailed her;—"Sail on the"—but that moment a breaking sea dashed on him from Moby Dick, and whelmed him for the time. But struggling out of it again, and chancing to rise on a towering crest, he shouted,—"Sail on the whale!—Drive him off!"

The Pequod's prow was pointed; and breaking up the charmed circle, she effectually parted the white whale from his victim. As he sullenly swam off, the boats flew to the rescue.

Dragged into Stubb's boat with blood-shot, blinded eyes, the white brine caking in his wrinkles; the long tension of Ahab's bodily strength did crack, and helplessly he yielded to his body's doom: for a time, lying all crushed in the bottom of Stubb's boat, like one trodden under foot of herds of elephants. Far inland, nameless wails came from him, as desolate sounds from out ravines.

But this intensity of his physical prostration did but so much the more abbreviate it. In an instant's compass, great hearts sometimes condense to one deep pang, the sum total of those shallow pains kindly diffused through feebler men's whole lives. And so, such hearts, though summary in each one suffering; still, if the gods decree it, in their life-time aggregate a whole age of woe, wholly made up of instantaneous intensities; for even in their pointless centres, those noble natures contain the entire circumferences of inferior souls.

"The harpoon," said Ahab, half way rising, and draggingly leaning on one bended arm—"is it safe?"

"Aye, sir, for it was not darted; this is it," said Stubb, showing it.

"Lay it before me;—any missing men?"

"One, two, three, four, five;—there were five oars, sir, and here are five men."

"That's good.—Help me, man; I wish to stand. So, so, I see him! there! there! going to leeward still; what a leaping spout!—Hands off from me! The eternal sap runs up in Ahab's bones again! Set the sail; out oars; the helm!"

It is often the case that when a boat is stove, its crew, being picked up by another boat, help to work that second boat; and the chase is thus continued with what is called double-banked oars. It was thus now. But the added power of the boat did not equal the added power of the whale, for he seemed to have treble-banked his every fin; swimming with a velocity which plainly showed, that if now, under these circumstances, pushed on, the chase would prove an indefinitely prolonged, if not a hopeless one; nor could any crew endure for so long a period, such an unintermitted, intense straining at the oar; a thing barely tolerable only in some one brief vicissitude. The ship itself, then, as it sometimes happens, offered the most promising intermediate means of overtaking the chase. Accordingly, the boats now made for her, and were soon swayed up to their cranes—the two parts of the wrecked boat having been previously secured by her—and then hoisting everything to her side, and stacking her canvas high up, and sideways outstretching it with stun-sails, like the double-jointed wings of an albatross; the Pequod bore down in the leeward wake of Moby-Dick. At the well known, methodic intervals, the whale's glittering spout was regularly announced from the manned mast-heads; and when he would

be reported as just gone down, Ahab would take the time, and then pacing the deck, binnacle-watch in hand, so soon as the last second of the allotted hour expired, his voice was heard.—"Whose is the doubloon now? D'ye see him?" and if the reply was, No, sir! straightway he commanded them to lift him to his perch. In this way the day wore on; Ahab, now aloft and motionless; anon, unrestingly pacing the planks.

As he was thus walking, uttering no sound, except to hail the men aloft, or to bid them hoist a sail still higher, or to spread one to a still greater breadth—thus to and fro pacing, beneath his slouched hat, at every turn he passed his own wrecked boat, which had been dropped upon the quarter-deck, and lay there reversed; broken bow to shattered stern. At last he paused before it; and as in an already over-clouded sky fresh troops of clouds will sometimes sail across, so over the old man's face there now stole some such added gloom as this.

Stubb saw him pause; and perhaps intending, not vainly, though, to evince his own unabated fortitude, and thus keep up a valiant place in his Captain's mind, he advanced, and eyeing the wreck exclaimed—"The thistle the ass refused;[5] it pricked his mouth too keenly, sir; ha! ha!"

"What soulless thing is this that laughs before a wreck? Man, man! did I not know thee brave as fearless fire (and as mechanical) I could swear thou wert a poltroon. Groan nor laugh should be heard before a wreck."

"Aye, sir," said Starbuck drawing near, "'tis a solemn sight; an omen, and an ill one."

"Omen? omen?—the dictionary! If the gods think to speak outright to man, they will honorably speak outright; not shake their heads, and give an old wives' darkling hint.—Begone! Ye two are the opposite poles of one thing; Starbuck is Stubb reversed, and Stubb is Starbuck; and ye two are all mankind; and Ahab stands alone among the millions of the peopled earth, nor gods nor men his neighbors! Cold, cold—I shiver!—How now? Aloft there! D'ye see him? Sing out for every spout, though he spout ten times a second!"

The day was nearly done; only the hem of his golden robe was rustling. Soon, it was almost dark, but the look-out men still remained unset.

"Can't see the spout now, sir;—too dark"—cried a voice from the air.

"How heading when last seen?"

"As before, sir,—straight to leeward."

"Good! he will travel slower now 'tis night. Down royals and top-gallant stun-sails, Mr. Starbuck. We must not run over him before morning; he's making a passage now, and may heave-to a while. Helm there! keep her full before the wind!—Aloft! come down!—Mr. Stubb, send a fresh hand to the fore-mast head, and see it manned till morning."—Then advancing towards the doubloon in the main-mast—"Men, this gold is mine, for I earned it; but I shall let it abide here till the White Whale is dead; and then, whosoever of ye first raises him, upon the day he shall be killed, this gold is that man's; and if on that day I shall again raise him, then, ten times its sum shall be divided among all of ye! Away now!—the deck is thine, sir."

5. Stubb misreads Aesop's fable in which the ass chooses the rough thistle over food that others consider more desirable.

And so saying, he placed himself half way within the scuttle, and slouching his hat, stood there till dawn, except when at intervals rousing himself to see how the night wore on.

CHAPTER 134

THE CHASE—SECOND DAY

At day-break, the three mast-heads were punctually manned afresh.

"D'ye see him?" cried Ahab, after allowing a little space for the light to spread.

"See nothing, sir."

"Turn up all hands and make sail! he travels faster than I thought for;—the top-gallant sails!—aye, they should have been kept on her all night. But no matter—'tis but resting for the rush."

Here be it said, that this pertinacious pursuit of one particular whale, continued through day into night, and through night into day, is a thing by no means unprecedented in the South sea fishery. For such is the wonderful skill, prescience of experience, and invincible confidence acquired by some great natural geniuses among the Nantucket commanders; that from the simple observation of a whale when last descried, they will, under certain given circumstances, pretty accurately foretell both the direction in which he will continue to swim for a time, while out of sight, as well as his probable rate of progression during that period. And, in these cases, somewhat as a pilot, when about losing sight of a coast, whose general trending he well knows, and which he desires shortly to return to again, but at some further point; like as this pilot stands by his compass, and takes the precise bearing of the cape at present visible, in order the more certainly to hit aright the remote, unseen headland, eventually to be visited: so does the fisherman, at his compass, with the whale; for after being chased, and diligently marked, through several hours of daylight, then, when night obscures the fish, the creature's future wake through the darkness is almost as established to the sagacious mind of the hunter, as the pilot's coast is to him. So that to this hunter's wondrous skill, the proverbial evanescence of a thing writ in water, a wake, is to all desired purposes well nigh as reliable as the steadfast land. And as the mighty iron Leviathan of the modern railway is so familiarly known in its every pace, that, with watches in their hands, men time his rate as doctors that of a baby's pulse; and lightly say of it, the up train or the down train will reach such or such a spot, at such or such an hour; even so, almost, there are occasions when these Nantucketers time that other Leviathan of the deep, according to the observed humor of his speed; and say to themselves, so many hours hence this whale will have gone two hundred miles, will have about reached this or that degree of latitude or longitude. But to render this acuteness at all successful in the end, the wind and the sea must be the whaleman's allies; for of what present avail to the becalmed or windbound mariner is the skill that assures him he is exactly ninety-three leagues and a quarter from his port? Inferable from these statements, are many collateral subtile matters touching the chase of whales.

The ship tore on; leaving such a furrow in the sea as when a cannon-ball, missent, becomes a plough-share and turns up the level field.

"By salt and hemp!" cried Stubb, "but this swift motion of the deck creeps up one's legs and tingles at the heart. This ship and I are two brave fellows!—Ha! ha! Some one take me up, and launch me, spine-wise, on the sea,—for by live-oaks! my spine's a keel. Ha, ha! we go the gait that leaves no dust behind!"

"There she blows—she blows!—she blows!—right ahead!" was now the mast-head cry.

"Aye, aye!" cried Stubb, "I knew it—ye can't escape—blow on and split your spout, O whale! the mad fiend himself is after ye! blow your trump—blister your lungs!—Ahab will dam off your blood, as a miller shuts his water-gate upon the stream!"

And Stubb did but speak out for well nigh all that crew. The frenzies of the chase had by this time worked them bubblingly up, like old wine worked anew. Whatever pale fears and forebodings some of them might have felt before; these were not only now kept out of sight through the growing awe of Ahab, but they were broken up, and on all sides routed, as timid prairie hares that scatter before the bounding bison. The hand of Fate had snatched all their souls; and by the stirring perils of the previous day; the rack of the past night's suspense; the fixed, unfearing, blind, reckless way in which their wild craft went plunging towards its flying mark; by all these things, their hearts were bowled along. The wind that made great bellies of their sails, and rushed the vessel on by arms invisible as irresistible; this seemed the symbol of that unseen agency which so enslaved them to the race.

They were one man, not thirty. For as the one ship that held them all; though it was put together of all contrasting things—oak, and maple, and pine wood; iron, and pitch, and hemp—yet all these ran into each other in the one concrete hull, which shot on its way, both balanced and directed by the long central keel; even so, all the individualities of the crew, this man's valor, that man's fear; guilt and guiltlessness, all varieties were welded into oneness, and were all directed to that fatal goal which Ahab their one lord and keel did point to.

The rigging lived. The mast-heads, like the tops of tall palms, were outspreadingly tufted with arms and legs. Clinging to a spar with one hand, some reached forth the other with impatient wavings; others, shading their eyes from the vivid sunlight, sat far out on the rocking yards; all the spars in full bearing of mortals, ready and ripe for their fate. Ah! how they still strove through that infinite blueness to seek out the thing that might destroy them!

"Why sing ye not out for him, if ye see him?" cried Ahab, when, after the lapse of some minutes since the first cry, no more had been heard. "Sway me up, men; ye have been deceived; not Moby Dick casts one odd jet that way, and then disappears."

It was even so; in their headlong eagerness, the men had mistaken some other thing for the whale-spout, as the event itself soon proved; for hardly had Ahab reached his perch; hardly was the rope belayed to its pin on deck, when he struck the key-note to an orchestra, that made the air vibrate as with the combined discharges of rifles. The triumphant halloo of thirty buckskin lungs was heard, as—much nearer to the ship than the

place of the imaginary jet, less than a mile ahead—Moby Dick bodily burst into view! For not by any calm and indolent spoutings; not by the peaceable gush of that mystic fountain in his head, did the White Whale now reveal his vicinity; but by the far more wondrous phenomenon of breaching. Rising with his utmost velocity from the furthest depths, the Sperm Whale thus booms his entire bulk into the pure element of air, and piling up a mountain of dazzling foam, shows his place to the distance of seven miles and more. In those moments, the torn, enraged waves he shakes off, seem his mane; in some cases, this breaching is his act of defiance.

"There she breaches! there she breaches!" was the cry, as in his immeasurable bravadoes the White Whale tossed himself salmon-like to Heaven. So suddenly seen in the blue plain of the sea, and relieved against the still bluer margin of the sky, the spray that he raised, for the moment, intolerably glittered and glared like a glacier; and stood there gradually fading and fading away from its first sparkling intensity, to the dim mistiness of an advancing shower in a vale.

"Aye, breach your last to the sun, Moby Dick!" cried Ahab, "thy hour and thy harpoon are at hand!—Down! down all of ye, but one man at the fore. The boats!—stand by!"

Unmindful of the tedious rope-ladders of the shrouds, the men, like shooting stars, slid to the deck, by the isolated backstays and halyards; while Ahab, less dartingly, but still rapidly was dropped from his perch.

"Lower away," he cried, so soon as he had reached his boat—a spare one, rigged the afternoon previous. "Mr. Starbuck, the ship is thine—keep away from the boats, but keep near them. Lower, all!"

As if to strike a quick terror into them, by this time being the first assailant himself, Moby Dick had turned, and was now coming for the three crews. Ahab's boat was central; and cheering his men, he told them he would take the whale head-and-head,—that is, pull straight up to his forehead,—a not uncommon thing; for when within a certain limit, such a course excludes the coming onset from the whale's sidelong vision. But ere that close limit was gained, and while yet all three boats were plain as the ship's three masts to his eye; the White Whale churning himself into furious speed, almost in an instant as it were, rushing among the boats with open jaws, and a lashing tail, offered appalling battle on every side; and heedless of the irons darted at him from every boat, seemed only intent on annihilating each separate plank of which those boats were made. But skilfully manœuvred, incessantly wheeling like trained chargers in the field; the boats for a while eluded him; though, at times, but by a plank's breadth; while all the time, Ahab's unearthly slogan tore every other cry but his to shreds.

But at last in his untraceable evolutions, the White Whale so crossed and recrossed, and in a thousand ways entangled the slack of the three lines now fast to him, that they foreshortened, and, of themselves, warped the devoted[1] boats towards the planted irons in him; though now for a moment the whale drew aside a little, as if to rally for a more tremendous charge. Seizing that opportunity, Ahab first paid out more line: and then was rapidly hauling and jerking in upon it again—hoping that way to disencumber it of some snarls—when lo!—a sight more savage than the embattled teeth of sharks!

1. This word means doomed, as in Milton's *Paradise Lost*.

Caught and twisted—corkscrewed in the mazes of the line, loose harpoons and lances, with all their bristling barbs and points, came flashing and dripping up to the chocks in the bows of Ahab's boat. Only one thing could be done. Seizing the boat-knife, he critically reached within—through—and then, without—the rays of steel; dragged in the line beyond, passed it, inboard, to the bowsman, and then, twice sundering the rope near the chocks—dropped the intercepted fagot of steel into the sea; and was all fast again. That instant, the White Whale made a sudden rush among the remaining tangles of the other lines; by so doing, irresistibly dragged the more involved boats of Stubb and Flask towards his flukes; dashed them together like two rolling husks on a surf-beaten beach, and then, diving down into the sea, disappeared in a boiling maelstrom, in which, for a space, the odorous cedar chips of the wrecks danced round and round, like the grated nutmeg in a swiftly stirred bowl of punch.

While the two crews were yet circling in the waters, reaching out after the revolving line-tubs, oars, and other floating furniture, while aslope little Flask bobbed up and down like an empty vial, twitching his legs upwards to escape the dreaded jaws of sharks; and Stubb was lustily singing out for some one to ladle him up; and while the old man's line—now parting—admitted of his pulling into the creamy pool to rescue whom he could;—in that wild simultaneousness of a thousand concreted perils,—Ahab's yet unstricken boat seemed drawn up towards Heaven by invisible wires,—as, arrow-like, shooting perpendicularly from the sea, the White Whale dashed his broad forehead against its bottom, and sent it, turning over and over, into the air; till it fell again—gunwale downwards—and Ahab and his men struggled out from under it, like seals from a sea-side cave.

The first uprising momentum of the whale—modifying its direction as he struck the surface—involuntarily launched him along it, to a little distance from the centre of the destruction he had made; and with his back to it, he now lay for a moment slowly feeling with his flukes from side to side; and whenever a stray oar, bit of plank, the least chip or crumb of the boats touched his skin, his tail swiftly drew back, and came sideways smiting the sea. But soon, as if satisfied that his work for that time was done, he pushed his pleated forehead through the ocean, and trailing after him the intertangled lines, continued his leeward way at a traveller's methodic pace.

As before, the attentive ship having descried the whole fight, again came bearing down to the rescue, and dropping a boat, picked up the floating mariners, tubs, oars, and whatever else could be caught at, and safely landed them on her decks. Some sprained shoulders, wrists, and ankles; livid contusions; wrenched harpoons and lances; inextricable intricacies of rope; shattered oars and planks; all these were there; but no fatal or even serious ill seemed to have befallen any one. As with Fedallah the day before, so Ahab was now found grimly clinging to his boat's broken half, which afforded a comparatively easy float; nor did it so exhaust him as the previous day's mishap.

But when he was helped to the deck, all eyes were fastened upon him; as instead of standing by himself he still half-hung upon the shoulder of Starbuck, who had thus far been the foremost to assist him. His ivory leg had been snapped off, leaving but one short sharp splinter.

"Aye aye, Starbuck, 'tis sweet to lean sometimes, be the leaner who he will; and would old Ahab had leaned oftener than he has."

"The ferrule has not stood, sir," said the carpenter, now coming up; "I put good work into that leg."

"But no bones broken, sir, I hope," said Stubb with true concern.

"Aye! and all splintered to pieces, Stubb!—d'ye see it.—But even with a broken bone, old Ahab is untouched; and I account no living bone of mine one jot more me, than this dead one that's lost. Nor white whale, nor man, nor fiend, can so much as graze old Ahab in his own proper and inaccessible being. Can any lead touch yonder floor, any mast scrape yonder roof?—Aloft there! which way?"

"Dead to leeward, sir."

"Up helm, then; pile on the sail again, ship keepers! down the rest of the spare boats and rig them—Mr. Starbuck away, and muster the boats' crews."

"Let me first help thee towards the bulwarks, sir."

"Oh, oh, oh! how this splinter gores me now! Accursed fate! that the unconquerable captain in the soul should have such a craven mate!"

"Sir?"

"My body, man, not thee. Give me something for a cane—there, that shivered lance will do. Muster the men. Surely I have not seen him yet. By heaven it cannot be!—missing?—quick! call them all."

The old man's hinted thought was true. Upon mustering the company, the Parsee was not there.

"The Parsee!" cried Stubb—"he must have been caught in——"

"The black vomit wrench thee!—run all of ye above, alow, cabin, forecastle—find him—not gone—not gone!"

But quickly they returned to him with the tidings that the Parsee was nowhere to be found.

"Aye, sir," said Stubb—"caught among the tangles of your line—I thought I saw him dragging under."

"*My* line! *my* line? Gone?—gone? What means that little word?—What death-knell rings in it, that old Ahab shakes as if he were the belfry. The harpoon, too!—toss over the litter there,—d'ye see it?—the forged iron, men, the white whale's—no, no, no,—blistered fool! this hand did dart it!—'tis in the fish!—Aloft there! Keep him nailed—Quick!—all hands to the rigging of the boats—collect the oars—harpooners! the irons, the irons!—hoist the royals higher—a pull on all the sheets!—helm there! steady, steady for your life! I'll ten times girdle the unmeasured globe; yea and dive straight through it, but I'll slay him yet!"

"Great God! but for one single instant show thyself," cried Starbuck; "never, never wilt thou capture him, old man—In Jesus' name no more of this, that's worse than devil's madness. Two days chased; twice stove to splinters; thy very leg once more snatched from under thee; thy evil shadow gone—all good angels mobbing thee with warnings:—what more wouldst thou have?—Shall we keep chasing this murderous fish till he swamps the last man? Shall we be dragged by him to the bottom of the sea? Shall we be towed by him to the infernal world? Oh, oh,—Impiety and blasphemy to hunt him more!"

"Starbuck, of late I've felt strangely moved to thee; ever since that hour we both saw—thou know'st what, in one another's eyes. But in this matter

of the whale, be the front of thy face to me as the palm of this hand—a lipless, unfeatured blank. Ahab is for ever Ahab, man. This whole act's immutably decreed. 'Twas rehearsed by thee and me a billion years before this ocean rolled. Fool! I am the Fates' lieutenant; I act under orders. Look thou, underling! that thou obeyest mine.—Stand round me, men. Ye see an old man cut down to the stump; leaning on a shivered lance; propped up on a lonely foot. 'Tis Ahab—his body's part; but Ahab's soul's a centipede, that moves upon a hundred legs. I feel strained, half stranded, as ropes that tow dismasted frigates in a gale; and I may look so. But ere I break, ye'll hear me crack; and till ye hear *that,* know that Ahab's hawser tows his purpose yet. Believe ye, men, in the things called omens? Then laugh aloud, and cry encore! For ere they drown, drowning things will twice rise to the surface; then rise again, to sink for evermore. So with Moby Dick—two days he's floated—to-morrow will be the third. Aye, men, he'll rise once more,—but only to spout his last! D'ye feel brave, men, brave?"

"As fearless fire," cried Stubb.

"And as mechanical," muttered Ahab. Then as the men went forward, he muttered on:—"The things called omens! And yesterday I talked the same to Starbuck there, concerning my broken boat. Oh! how valiantly I seek to drive out of others' hearts what's clinched so fast in mine!—The Parsee—the Parsee!—gone, gone? and he was to go before:—but still was to be seen again ere I could perish—How's that?—There's a riddle now might baffle all the lawyers backed by the ghosts of the whole line of judges:—like a hawk's beak it pecks my brain. *I'll, I'll* solve it, though!"

When dusk descended, the whale was still in sight to leeward.

So once more the sail was shortened, and everything passed nearly as on the previous night; only, the sound of hammers, and the hum of the grindstone was heard till nearly daylight, as the men toiled by lanterns in the complete and careful rigging of the spare boats and sharpening their fresh weapons for the morrow. Meantime, of the broken keel of Ahab's wrecked craft the carpenter made him another leg; while still as on the night before, slouched Ahab stood fixed within his scuttle; his hid, heliotrope glance anticipatingly gone backward on its dial; set due eastward for the earliest sun.

CHAPTER 135

THE CHASE.—THIRD DAY

The morning of the third day dawned fair and fresh, and once more the solitary night-man at the fore-mast-head was relieved by crowds of the daylight look-outs, who dotted every mast and almost every spar.

"D'ye see him?" cried Ahab; but the whale was not yet in sight.

"In his infallible wake, though; but follow that wake, that's all. Helm there; steady, as thou goest, and hast been going. What a lovely day again! were it a new-made world, and made for a summer-house to the angels, and this morning the first of its throwing open to them, a fairer day could not dawn upon that world. Here's food for thought, had Ahab time to think; but Ahab never thinks; he only feels, feels, feels; *that's* tingling enough for mortal man! to think's audacity. God only has that right and privilege. Thinking is, or ought to be, a coolness and a calmness; and our

poor hearts throb, and our poor brains beat too much for that. And yet, I've sometimes thought my brain was very calm—frozen calm, this old skull cracks so, like a glass in which the contents turn to ice, and shiver it. And still this hair is growing now; this moment growing, and heat must breed it; but no, it's like that sort of common grass that will grow anywhere, between the earthy clefts of Greenland ice or in Vesuvius lava. How the wild winds blow it; they whip it about me as the torn shreds of split sails lash the tossed ship they cling to. A vile wind that has no doubt blown ere this through prison corridors and cells, and wards of hospitals, and ventilated them, and now comes blowing hither as innocent as fleeces. Out upon it!—it's tainted. Were I the wind, I'd blow no more on such a wicked, miserable world. I'd crawl somewhere to a cave, and slink there. And yet, 'tis a noble and heroic thing, the wind! who ever conquered it? In every fight it has the last and bitterest blow. Run tilting at it, and you but run through it. Ha! a coward wind that strikes stark naked men, but will not stand to receive a single blow. Even Ahab is a braver thing—a nobler thing than *that*. Would now the wind but had a body; but all the things that most exasperate and outrage mortal man, all these things are bodiless, but only bodiless as objects, not as agents. There's a most special, a most cunning, oh, a most malicious difference! And yet, I say again, and swear it now, that there's something all glorious and gracious in the wind. These warm Trade Winds, at least, that in the clear heavens blow straight on, in strong and steadfast, vigorous mildness; and veer not from their mark, however the baser currents of the sea may turn and tack, and mightiest Mississippies of the land shift and swerve about, uncertain where to go at last. And by the eternal Poles! these same Trades that so directly blow my good ship on; these Trades, or something like them—something so unchangeable, and full as strong, blow my keeled soul along! To it! Aloft there! What d'ye see?"

"Nothing, sir."

"Nothing! and noon at hand! The doubloon goes a-begging! See the sun! Aye, aye, it must be so. I've oversailed him. How, got the start? Aye, he's chasing *me* now; not I, *him*—that's bad; I might have known it, too. Fool! the lines—the harpoons he's towing. Aye, aye, I have run him by last night. About! about! Come down, all of ye, but the regular look outs! Man the braces!"

Steering as she had done, the wind had been somewhat on the Pequod's quarter, so that now being pointed in the reverse direction, the braced ship sailed hard upon the breeze as she rechurned the cream in her own white wake.

"Against the wind he now steers for the open jaw," murmured Starbuck to himself, as he coiled the new-hauled main-brace upon the rail. "God keep us, but already my bones feel damp within me, and from the inside wet my flesh. I misdoubt me that I disobey my God in obeying him!"

"Stand by to sway me up!" cried Ahab, advancing to the hempen basket. "We should meet him soon."

"Aye, aye, sir," and straightway Starbuck did Ahab's bidding, and once more Ahab swung on high.

A whole hour now passed; gold-beaten out to ages. Time itself now held long breaths with keen suspense. But at last, some three points off the weather bow, Ahab descried the spout again, and instantly from the

three mast-heads three shrieks went up as if the tongues of fire had voiced it.

"Forehead to forehead I meet thee, this third time, Moby Dick! On deck there!—brace sharper up; crowd her into the wind's eye. He's too far off to lower yet, Mr. Starbuck. The sails shake! Stand over that helmsman with a top-maul! So, so; he travels fast, and I must down. But let me have one more good round look aloft here at the sea; there's time for that. An old, old sight, and yet somehow so young; aye, and not changed a wink since I first saw it, a boy, from the sand-hills of Nantucket! The same!—the same!—the same to Noah as to me. There's a soft shower to leeward. Such lovely leewardings! They must lead somewhere—to something else than common land, more palmy than the palms. Leeward! the white whale goes that way; look to windward, then; the better if the bitterer quarter. But good bye, good bye, old mast-head! What's this?—green? aye, tiny mosses in these warped cracks. No such green weather stains on Ahab's head! There's the difference now between man's old age and matter's. But aye, old mast, we both grow old together; sound in our hulls, though, are we not, my ship? Aye, minus a leg, that's all. By heaven this dead wood has the better of my live flesh every way. I can't compare with it; and I've known some ships made of dead trees outlast the lives of men made of the most vital stuff of vital fathers. What's that he said? he should still go before me, my pilot; and yet to be seen again? But where? Will I have eyes at the bottom of the sea, supposing I descend those endless stairs? and all night I've been sailing from him, wherever he did sink to. Aye, aye, like many more thou told'st direful truth as touching thyself, O Parsee; but, Ahab, there thy shot fell short. Good by, mast-head—keep a good eye upon the whale, the while I'm gone. We'll talk to-morrow, nay, to-night, when the white whale lies down there, tied by head and tail."

He gave the word; and still gazing round him, was steadily lowered through the cloven blue air to the deck.

In due time the boats were lowered; but as standing in his shallop's stern, Ahab just hovered upon the point of the descent, he waved to the mate,—who held one of the tackle-ropes on deck—and bade him pause.

"Starbuck!"

"Sir?"

"For the third time my soul's ship starts upon this voyage, Starbuck."

"Aye, sir, thou wilt have it so."

"Some ships sail from their ports, and ever afterwards are missing, Starbuck!"

"Truth, sir: saddest truth."

"Some men die at ebb tide; some at low water; some at the full of the flood;—and I feel now like a billow that's all one crested comb, Starbuck. I am old;—shake hands with me, man."

Their hands met; their eyes fastened; Starbuck's tears the glue.

"Oh, my captain, my captain!—noble heart—go not—go not!—see, it's a brave man that weeps; how great the agony of the persuasion then!"

"Lower away!"—cried Ahab, tossing the mate's arm from him. "Stand by the crew!"

In an instant the boat was pulling round close under the stern.

"The sharks! the sharks!" cried a voice from the low cabin-window there; "O master, my master, come back!"

But Ahab heard nothing; for his own voice was high-lifted then; and the boat leaped on.

Yet the voice spake true; for scarce had he pushed from the ship, when numbers of sharks, seemingly rising from out the dark waters beneath the hull, maliciously snapped at the blades of the oars, every time they dipped in the water; and in this way accompanied the boat with their bites. It is a thing not uncommonly happening to the whale-boats in those swarming seas; the sharks at times apparently following them in the same prescient way that vultures hover over the banners of marching regiments in the east. But these were the first sharks that had been observed by the Pequod since the White Whale had been first descried; and whether it was that Ahab's crew were all such tiger-yellow barbarians, and therefore their flesh more musky to the senses of the sharks—a matter sometimes well known to affect them,—however it was, they seemed to follow that one boat without molesting the others.

"Heart of wrought steel!" murmured Starbuck gazing over the side, and following with his eyes the receding boat—"canst thou yet ring boldly to that sight?—lowering thy keel among ravening sharks, and followed by them, open-mouthed to the chase; and this the critical third day?—For when three days flow together in one continuous intense pursuit; be sure the first is the morning, the second the noon, and the third the evening and the end of that thing—be that end what it may. Oh! my God! what is this that shoots through me, and leaves me so deadly calm, yet expectant,—fixed at the top of a shudder! Future things swim before me, as in empty outlines and skeletons; all the past is somehow grown dim. Mary, girl! thou fadest in pale glories behind me; boy! I seem to see but thy eyes grown wondrous blue. Strangest problems of life seem clearing; but clouds sweep between—Is my journey's end coming? My legs feel faint; like his who has footed it all day. Feel thy heart,—beats it yet?—Stir thyself, Starbuck!—stave it off—move, move! speak aloud!—Mast-head there! See ye my boy's hand on the hill?—Crazed;—aloft there!—keep thy keenest eye upon the boats:—mark well the whale!—Ho! again!—drive off that hawk! see! he pecks—he tears the vane"—pointing to the red flag flying at the main-truck—"Ha! he soars away with it!—Where's the old man now? sees't thou that sight, oh Ahab!—shudder, shudder!"

The boats had not gone very far, when by a signal from the mast-heads—a downward pointed arm, Ahab knew that the whale had sounded; but intending to be near him at the next rising, he held on his way a little sideways from the vessel; the becharmed crew maintaining the profoundest silence, as the head-beat waves hammered and hammered against the opposing bow.

"Drive, drive in your nails, oh ye waves! to their uttermost heads drive them in! ye but strike a thing without a lid; and no coffin and no hearse can be mine:—and hemp only can kill me! Ha! ha!"

Suddenly the waters around them slowly swelled in broad circles; then quickly upheaved, as if sideways sliding from a submerged berg of ice, swiftly rising to the surface. A low rumbling sound was heard; a subterraneous hum; and then all held their breaths; as bedraggled with trailing ropes, and harpoons, and lances, a vast form shot lengthwise, but obliquely from the sea. Shrouded in a thin drooping veil of mist, it hovered for a moment in the rainbowed air; and then fell swamping back into the deep.

Crushed thirty feet upwards, the waters flashed for an instant like heaps of fountains, then brokenly sank in a shower of flakes, leaving the circling surface creamed like new milk round the marble trunk of the whale.

"Give way!" cried Ahab to the oarsmen, and the boats darted forward to the attack; but maddened by yesterday's fresh irons that corroded in him, Moby Dick seemed combinedly possessed by all the angels that fell from heaven. The wide tiers of welded tendons overspreading his broad white forehead, beneath the transparent skin, looked knitted together; as head on, he came churning his tail among the boats; and once more flailed them apart; spilling out the irons and lances from the two mates' boats, and dashing in one side of the upper part of their bows, but leaving Ahab's almost without a scar.

While Daggoo and Queequeg were stopping the strained planks; and as the whale swimming out from them, turned, and showed one entire flank as he shot by them again; at that moment a quick cry went up. Lashed round and round to the fish's back; pinioned in the turns upon turns in which, during the past night, the whale had reeled the involutions of the lines around him, the half torn body of the Parsee was seen; his sable raiment frayed to shreds; his distended eyes turned full upon old Ahab.

The harpoon dropped from his hand.

"Befooled, befooled!"—drawing in a long lean breath—"Aye, Parsee! I see thee again.—Aye, and thou goest before; and this, *this* then is the hearse that thou didst promise. But I hold thee to the last letter of thy word. Where is the second hearse? Away, mates, to the ship! those boats are useless now; repair them if ye can in time, and return to me; if not, Ahab is enough to die—Down, men! the first thing that but offers to jump from this boat I stand in, that thing I harpoon. Ye are not other men, but my arms and my legs; and so obey me.—Where's the whale? gone down again?"

But he looked too nigh the boat; for as if bent upon escaping with the corpse he bore, and as if the particular place of the last encounter had been but a stage in his leeward voyage, Moby Dick was now again steadily swimming forward; and had almost passed the ship,—which thus far had been sailing in the contrary direction to him, though for the present her headway had been stopped. He seemed swimming with his utmost velocity, and now only intent upon pursuing his own straight path in the sea.

"Oh! Ahab," cried Starbuck, "not too late is it, even now, the third day, to desist. See! Moby Dick seeks thee not. It is thou, thou, that madly seekest him!"

Setting sail to the rising wind, the lonely boat was swiftly impelled to leeward, by both oars and canvas. And at last when Ahab was sliding by the vessel, so near as plainly to distinguish Starbuck's face as he leaned over the rail, he hailed him to turn the vessel about, and follow him, not too swiftly, at a judicious interval. Glancing upwards, he saw Tashtego, Queequeg, and Daggoo, eagerly mounting to the three mast-heads; while the oarsmen were rocking in the two staved boats which had but just been hoisted to the side, and were busily at work in repairing them. One after the other, through the port-holes, as he sped, he also caught flying glimpses of Stubb and Flask, busying themselves on deck among bundles of new irons and lances. As he saw all this; as he heard the hammers in the broken boats; far other hammers seemed driving a nail into his heart. But he

rallied. And now marking that the vane or flag was gone from the main-mast-head, he shouted to Tashtego, who had just gained that perch, to descend again for another flag, and a hammer and nails, and so nail it to the mast.

Whether fagged by the three days' running chase, and the resistance to his swimming in the knotted hamper he bore; or whether it was some latent deceitfulness and malice in him: whichever was true, the White Whale's way now began to abate, as it seemed, from the boat so rapidly nearing him once more; though indeed the whale's last start had not been so long a one as before. And still as Ahab glided over the waves the unpitying sharks accompanied him; and so pertinaciously stuck to the boat; and so continually bit at the plying oars, that the blades became jagged and crunched, and left small splinters in the sea, at almost every dip.

"Heed them not! those teeth but give new rowlocks to your oars. Pull on! 'tis the better rest, the shark's jaw than the yielding water."

"But at every bite, sir, the thin blades grow smaller and smaller!"

"They will last long enough! pull on!—But who can tell"—he muttered—"whether these sharks swim to feast on the whale or on Ahab?—But pull on! Aye, all alive, now—we near him. The helm! take the helm; let me pass,"—and so saying, two of the oarsmen helped him forward to the bows of the still flying boat.

At length as the craft was cast to one side, and ran ranging along with the White Whale's flank, he seemed strangely oblivious of its advance—as the whale sometimes will—and Ahab was fairly within the smoky mountain mist, which, thrown off from the whale's spout, curled round his great, Monadnock hump;[1] he was even thus close to him; when, with body arched back, and both arms lengthwise high-lifted to the poise, he darted his fierce iron, and his far fiercer curse into the hated whale. As both steel and curse sank to the socket, as if sucked into a morass, Moby Dick sideways writhed; spasmodically rolled his nigh flank against the bow, and, without staving a hole in it, so suddenly canted the boat over, that had it not been for the elevated part of the gunwale to which he then clung, Ahab would once more have been tossed into the sea. As it was, three of the oarsmen—who foreknew not the precise instant of the dart, and were therefore unprepared for its effects—these were flung out; but so fell, that, in an instant two of them clutched the gunwale again, and rising to its level on a combing wave, hurled themselves bodily inboard again; the third man helplessly dropping astern, but still afloat and swimming.

Almost simultaneously, with a mighty volition of ungraduated, instantaneous swiftness, the White Whale darted through the weltering sea. But when Ahab cried out to the steersman to take new turns with the line, and hold it so; and commanded the crew to turn round on their seats, and tow the boat up to the mark; the moment the treacherous line felt that double strain and tug, it snapped in the empty air!

"What breaks in me? Some sinew cracks!—'tis whole again; oars! oars! Burst in upon him!"

Hearing the tremendous rush of the sea-crashing boat, the whale wheeled round to present his blank forehead at bay; but in that evolution, catching sight of the nearing black hull of the ship; seemingly seeing in it

1. Mountain in New Hampshire.

the source of all his persecutions; bethinking it—it may be—a larger and nobler foe; of a sudden, he bore down upon its advancing prow, smiting his jaws amid fiery showers of foam.

Ahab staggered; his hand smote his forehead. "I grow blind; hands! stretch out before me that I may yet grope my way. Is't night?"

"The whale! The ship!" cried the cringing oarsmen.

"Oars! oars! Slope downwards to thy depths, O sea, that ere it be for ever too late, Ahab may slide this last, last time upon his mark! I see: the ship! the ship! Dash on, my men! Will ye not save my ship?"

But as the oarsmen violently forced their boat through the sledge-hammering seas, the before whale-smitten bow-ends of two planks burst through, and in an instant almost, the temporarily disabled boat lay nearly level with the waves; its half-wading, splashing crew, trying hard to stop the gap and bale out the pouring water.

Meantime, for that one beholding instant, Tashtego's mast-head hammer remained suspended in his hand; and the red flag, half-wrapping him as with a plaid, then streamed itself straight out from him, as his own forward-flowing heart; while Starbuck and Stubb, standing upon the bowsprit beneath, caught sight of the down-coming monster just as soon as he.

"The whale, the whale! Up helm, up helm! Oh, all ye sweet powers of air, now hug me close! Let not Starbuck die, if die he must, in a woman's fainting fit. Up helm, I say—ye fools, the jaw! the jaw! Is this the end of all my bursting prayers? all my lifelong fidelities? Oh, Ahab, Ahab, lo, thy work. Steady! helmsman, steady. Nay, nay! Up helm again! He turns to meet us! Oh, his unappeasable brow drives on towards one, whose duty tells him he cannot depart. My God, stand by me now!"

"Stand not by me, but stand under me, whoever you are that will now help Stubb; for Stubb, too, sticks here. I grin at thee, thou grinning whale! Who ever helped Stubb, or kept Stubb awake, but Stubb's own unwinking eye? And now poor Stubb goes to bed upon a mattrass that is all too soft; would it were stuffed with brushwood! I grin at thee, thou grinning whale! Look ye, sun, moon, and stars! I call ye assassins of as good a fellow as ever spouted up his ghost. For all that, I would yet ring glasses with ye, would ye but hand the cup! Oh, oh! oh, oh! thou grinning whale, but there'll be plenty of gulping soon! Why fly ye not, O Ahab! For me, off shoes and jacket to it; let Stubb die in his drawers! A most mouldy and over salted death, though;—cherries! cherries! cherries! Oh, Flask, for one red cherry ere we die!"

"Cherries? I only wish that we were where they grow. Oh, Stubb, I hope my poor mother's drawn my part-pay ere this; if not, few coppers will now come to her, for the voyage is up."

From the ship's bows, nearly all the seamen now hung inactive; hammers, bits of plank, lances, and harpoons, mechanically retained in their hands, just as they had darted from their various employments; all their enchanted eyes intent upon the whale, which from side to side strangely vibrating his predestinating head, sent a broad band of overspreading semicircular foam before him as he rushed. Retribution, swift vengeance, eternal malice were in his whole aspect, and spite of all that mortal man could do, the solid white buttress of his forehead smote the ship's starboard bow, till men and timbers reeled. Some fell flat upon their faces.

Like dislodged trucks,[2] the heads of the harpooneers aloft shook on their bull-like necks. Through the breach, they heard the waters pour, as mountain torrents down a flume.

"The ship! The hearse!—the second hearse!" cried Ahab from the boat; "its wood could only be American!"

Diving beneath the settling ship, the whale ran quivering along its keel; but turning under water, swiftly shot to the surface again, far off the other bow, but within a few yards of Ahab's boat, where, for a time, he lay quiescent.

"I turn my body from the sun. What ho, Tashtego! let me hear thy hammer. Oh! ye three unsurrendered spires of mine; thou uncracked keel; and only god-bullied hull; thou firm deck, and haughty helm, and Pole-pointed prow,—death-glorious ship! must ye then perish, and without me? Am I cut off from the last fond pride of meanest shipwrecked captains? Oh, lonely death on lonely life! Oh, now I feel my topmost greatness lies in my topmost grief. Ho, ho! from all your furthest bounds, pour ye now in, ye bold billows of my whole foregone life, and top this one piled comber of my death! Towards thee I roll, thou all-destroying but unconquering whale; to the last I grapple with thee; from hell's heart I stab at thee; for hate's sake I spit my last breath at thee. Sink all coffins and all hearses to one common pool! and since neither can be mine, let me then tow to pieces, while still chasing thee, though tied to thee, thou damned whale! *Thus*, I give up the spear!"

The harpoon was darted; the stricken whale flew forward; with igniting velocity the line ran through the groove;—ran foul. Ahab stooped to clear it; he did clear it; but the flying turn caught him round the neck, and voicelessly as Turkish mutes bowstring their victim, he was shot out of the boat, ere the crew knew he was gone. Next instant, the heavy eye-splice in the rope's final end flew out of the stark-empty tub, knocked down an oarsman, and smiting the sea, disappeared in its depths.

For an instant, the tranced boat's crew stood still; then turned. "The ship? Great God, where is the ship?" Soon they through dim, bewildering mediums saw her sidelong fading phantom, as in the gaseous Fata Morgana;[3] only the uppermost masts out of water; while fixed by infatuation, or fidelity, or fate, to their once lofty perches, the pagan harpooneers still maintained their sinking lookouts on the sea. And now, concentric circles seized the lone boat itself, and all its crew, and each floating oar, and every lance-pole, and spinning, animate and inanimate, all round and round in one vortex, carried the smallest chip of the Pequod out of sight.

But as the last whelmings intermixingly poured themselves over the sunken head of the Indian at the mainmast, leaving a few inches of the erect spar yet visible, together with long streaming yards of the flag, which calmly undulated, with ironical coincidings, over the destroying billows they almost touched;—at that instant, a red arm and a hammer hovered backwardly uplifted in the open air, in the act of nailing the flag faster and yet faster to the subsiding spar. A sky-hawk that tauntingly had followed the main-truck downwards from its natural home among the stars,

2. Wooden caps at the tops of mastheads.
3. Distorted mirage seen as a horizontal band above the horizon, named for the enchantress Morgan le Fay, half-sister of King Arthur.

pecking at the flag, and incommoding Tashtego there; this bird now chanced to intercept its broad fluttering wing between the hammer and the wood; and simultaneously feeling that etherial thrill, the submerged savage beneath, in his death-grasp, kept his hammer frozen there; and so the bird of heaven, with archangelic shrieks, and his imperial beak thrust upwards, and his whole captive form folded in the flag of Ahab, went down with his ship, which, like Satan, would not sink to hell till she had dragged a living part of heaven along with her, and helmeted herself with it.

Now small fowls flew screaming over the yet yawning gulf; a sullen white surf beat against its steep sides; then all collapsed, and the great shroud of the sea rolled on as it rolled five thousand years ago.[4]

EPILOGUE

"AND I ONLY AM ESCAPED ALONE TO TELL THEE."[1]

Job.

The drama's done. Why then here does any one step forth?—Because one did survive the wreck.

It so chanced, that after the Parsee's disappearance, I was he whom the Fates ordained to take the place of Ahab's bowsman, when that bowsman assumed the vacant post; the same, who, when on the last day the three men were tossed from out the rocking boat, was dropped astern. So, floating on the margin of the ensuing scene, and in full sight of it, when the half-spent suction of the sunk ship reached me, I was then, but slowly, drawn towards the closing vortex. When I reached it, it had subsided to a creamy pool. Round and round, then, and ever contracting towards the button-like black bubble at the axis of that slowly wheeling circle, like another Ixion[2] *I did revolve. Till, gaining that vital centre, the black bubble upward burst; and now, liberated by reason of its cunning spring, and, owing to its great buoyancy, rising with great force, the coffin life-buoy shot lengthwise from the sea, fell over, and floated by my side. Buoyed up by that coffin, for almost one whole day and night, I floated on a soft and dirge-like main. The unharming sharks, they glided by as if with padlocks on their mouths; the savage sea-hawks sailed with sheathed beaks. On the second day, a sail drew near, nearer, and picked me up at last. It was the devious-cruising Rachel, that in her retracing search after her missing children, only found another orphan.*

FINIS

4. At the time of Noah's flood.

1. Job 1.14–19, the formula with which each of four messengers concludes his story of the destruction of Job's possessions and the death of his family.
2. In Greek mythology Ixion, a treacherous violator of hospitality and kinship (unlike Ishmael), is bound to a winged fiery wheel, which spins forever through the universe; Ishmael's helpless revolving only seemed to be lasting forever.

Emendations

Scholarly study of the text of *Moby-Dick* dates from "The Text: History, Variants, and Emendations" (pp. 471–498) in the 1967 Norton Critical Edition edited by Harrison Hayford and me. Aware that wrong words, many miscopied from Melville's bad handwriting, might be hiding on any page, Hayford and I emended conservatively, preferring to open up study rather than claim to print a "definitive" text. In the 1988 Northwestern-Newberry edition (edited by Hayford and Parker again, and G. Thomas Tanselle) the list of variants and most of the emendations were carried over from the 1967 NCE, and the 1988 text incorporated emendations only suggested in 1967 as well as new emendations, particularly from the sources of the "Extracts." This third NCE list is still more conservative and less cluttered, for it omits obvious typos in the 1851 American edition (all listed in 1988) and makes fewer spelling emendations because newspaper databases and other internet resources show that many now-unfamiliar usages were acceptable in Melville's time. The chapter titles in the recto running heads follow the 1851 Harper edition, which put chapter titles on both verso and recto. A certain raggedness is more fitting to Melville and his masterpiece than pedantic hypercorrectness. Incorporating most of the emendations from the 1967 NCE and others from the 1988 NN edition as well as newer ones, this revised third NCE is once again what a wraparound banner on 1967 copies proclaimed: "As close to Melville's final intention as modern scholarship has achieved." Page and line numbers are to the present 3rd Norton Critical Edition (abbreviated NCE). In the list *E* stands for the first English edition of *The Whale* (London: Richard Bentley, 1851). *A* stands for the first American edition of *Moby-Dick* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1851).

5.9 NCE: Cleaning | A&E: Clearing
8.38–39 NCE&E: a boiling pan | A: boiling pan
9.2 NCE: recure | A&E: secure
9.4 NCE: lovely | A&E: lowly
9.6 NCE: flies from | A&E: flies thro'
9.11–12 NCE: Hofmannus | A&E: Hosmannus
9.15 NCE: iron flail | A&E: modern flail
9.25 NCE&E: Holy War. | A&E: Pilgrim's Progress.
9.31 NCE: on the deep | A&E: in the deep
9.34 NCE: trunk spouts | A&E: breath spouts
10.3 NCE: foot water | A&E: feet water
10.26 NCE: eighty foot | A&E: eighty feet
10.27 NCE: beside | A&E: besides
10.28 NCE: Pitfirren | A&E: Pitferren

10.33 NCE: Stafford | A&E: Strafford
10.38 NCE: more in these | A&E: more in those
10.47 NCE&E: Tho' stiff | A: Tho' stuffed
11.15 NCE: brim-stone | A&E: lime-stone
11.23 NCE: 1788 | A&E: 1778
11.32 NCE: near the coasts | A&E: near the coast
11.40 NCE: rockets flew | A&E: rockets blew
11.41 NCE: momentary fires | A&E: momentary fire
11.42 NCE: Amid | A&E: Around
12.23 NCE: mysterious instinct A&E: mysterious instincts
12.26 NCE: front or jaw, | A&E: front or jaw.
13.8 NCE: Chase | A&E: Chace
13.13 NCE: Ocean." | A&E: Ocean.
13.13 NCE: Chase | A&E: Chace
13.15 NCE: on the shrouds | A&E: in the shrouds
13.28 NCE: expanded jaw | A&E: expanded jaws
13.43 NCE: employ those | A&E: employ these
14.19 NCE: *Mutiny*," | A&E: *Mutiny*,
14.20 NCE&E: *Hussey,* | A: *Hussey*
14.36 NCE: as gathered | A&E: gathered
15.7 NCE&E: her mere | A: her near
16.20 NCE&E: Battery | A: battery
17.11 NCE&E: in the needles | A: of the needles
18.1 NCE&E: and make him the own brother | A: and own brother
22.13 NCE&E: of out-/hanging light | A: of light
23.5 NCE: wrapper | A&E: wrapper—
23.5 NCE: afterwards)—| A&E: afterwards)
24.1 NCE: at last came | A&E: at last come
25.18 NCE&E: gulp | A: gulph
27.30 NCE&E: any decent | A: my decent
28.30 NCE&E: airley | A: early
28.34 NCE: bamboozling | A&E: bamboozingly
29.38 NCE: Sal | A&E: Sall
29.46 NCE&E: exclaimed, | A: exclaimed
30.18 NCE: wardrobe no doubt, | A&E: wardrobe, no doubt
30.26 NCE: the same as you see | A: as you see the same in | E: the same as in
35.37 NCE: having the whole | A&E: leaving the whole
38.21 NCE&E: Tongatabooans | A: Tongatabooarrs
39.12 NCE: Canaan, | A&E: Canaan;
39.15 NCE&E: houses, | A: houses;
44.31 NCE&E: And left me | A: And lift me
45.13–14 NCE&E: 'And . . . Jonah.' | A: "And . . . Jonah."
46.29 NCE&E: "'Who's | A: 'Who's
48.27 NCE&E: become | A: became
48.35 NCE&E: "And | A: And
50.24 NCE: remained, | A&E: remained
51.2 NCE: bound together | A&E: found together
54.41 NCE&E: Kokovoko, | A: Rokovoko
54.43 NCE&E: While yet | A: When
55.27 NCE&E: might haply gain | A: might happily gain

57.6 NCE: hands | A&E: hand
57.14–15 NCE&E: Kokovoko | A: Rokovoko
57.19 NCE&E: Kokovoko | A: Rokovoko
58.12 NCE&E: dived her bows | A: dived her brows
58.37 NCE: bery | A&E: bevy
63.1 NCE&E: fishy | A: fishing
63.29 NCE&E: ony | A: only
63.32 NCE&E: a-night | A: at night
66.26 NCE&E: marchant | A: merchent
68.29 NCE&E: *thee* and *thou* | A: thee and thou
69.3 NCE&E: virgin, voluntary, | A: virgin voluntary
69.23–24 NCE&E: worthy Captain Bildad |A: worthy Captain Peleg
71.20–21 NCE: "'*Lay* . . . moth'" | A&E: "*Lay* . . . moth—"
71.40–41 NCE: "'for . . . also.'" | A: "for . . . also."
72.36 NCE: Thank ye; thank ye | A&E: that's he; thank ye
72.42 NCE&E: does *he* want | A: does he want
73.28 NCE&E: that, | A: that
75.37 NCE: mustard pot | A&E: vinegar cruet
76.12 NCE&E: knob | A: knot
76.33 NCE&E: island? | A: island.
78.19 NCE&E: 18 | A: XVII
79.40 NCE: Peleg, to his partner | A&E: Peleg, his partner
80.21 NCE&E: Bel | A: Bell
81.2 NCE&E: Captain | A: captain
82.27 NCE&E: prophecy? | A: prophecy.
83.7 NCE&E: will you?" | A: will you?
84.19 NCE&E: stowage | A: storage
84.43–85.1 NCE&E: came running | A: came hobbling
87.31 NCE&E: him, in | A: him in
87.44 NCE: gifts | A&E: gift
89.15 NCE&E: Quohog | A: Quohag
93.15 NCE&E: Cooks | A: Cookes
93.20 NCE&E: Cook | A: Cooke
93.24 NCE&E: Cook | A: Cooke
96.41 NCE&E: courage is | A: courage was
97.26 NCE&E: bravery, chiefly | A: bravery chiefly,
98.13 NCE: mighty | A&E: mighty,
100.11 NCE: presently | A&E: probably
101.35 NCE: came back | A&E: come back
101.35–36 NCE&E: he never did! Poor Alabama boy! | A: he never did—oh, no! he went before. Poor Alabama boy!
107.42 NCE: 'Slid | A&E: Slid
108.10 NCE&E: 'Halloa,' | A: 'Halloa,
108.29 NCE&E: never speak quick to him | A: never speak to him
109.27 NCE: Bonnaterre | A&E: Bonneterre
109.29 NCE: Olmsted | A&E: Olmstead
110.39 NCE: 1766 | A&E: 1776
111.42 NCE: Lamantins | A&E: Lamatins
112.4 NCE: Pottfisch | A&E: Pottfish
112.36 NCE&E: Baleine | A: Baliene
112.37 NCE: Gröndlands Valfisk | A&E: Growlands Walfish

115.8 NCE: *Killer . . . Thrasher* | A&E: *Thrasher . . . Killer*
119.23 NCE&E: Now, one of the grand distinctions | A: Now, the grand distinction
120.24 NCE&E: direst swing | A: direct swing
124.9 NCE&E: the whetstones | A: the whetstone
126.3 NCE&E: even when most | A: ever when most
126.8 NCE: however, | A: however
126.26 NCE&E: pleasant— | A: pleasant
127.9 NCE&E: coolish weather | A: cold weather
128.21 NCE&E: we Southern fishers | A: we South fishers
129.26 NCE&E: Wickliff's | A: Cranmer's
130.19 NCE: 'Twill | A&E: T'will
131.14 NCE&E: men,—a doubloon. | A: men.
133.16 NCE: jealously | A&E: jealousy
134.32 NCE&E: wert not thou | A: wer't not thou
137.16 NCE&E: demogorgon | A: demigorgon
138.7 NCE: loves | A&E : love
138.20 NCE&E: commanded— | A: commanded.—
140.3 NCE: comes | A&E: come's
140.27 NCE&E: one ball | A: a ball
140.27 NCE&E: your scholars | A: you scholars
141.8 NCE: the waves'—the snow-caps' | A&E: the waves—the snow's caps
141.20–21 NCE&E: low-valed, high-palmed Tahiti! | A: low veiled, high palmed Tahiti!
146.6 NCE: terror | A&E: terrors
146.40–41 NCE&E: and also a thing | A: as well as thing
147.5 NCE: Strella | A&E: Strello
150.25 NCE&E: Had any of | A: Had any one of
151.21 NCE&E: Cæsarian | A: Cæsarian,
152.26 NCE&E: albatross: | A: albatross,
154.13 NCE&E: as much the badge | A: As much like the badge
155.17 NCE&E: seas; | A: seas:
156.6 NCE: me"? | A: me?"
160.11 NCE&E: time and place | A: time or place
160.12 NCE: probability | A&E: possibility
160.33 NCE&E: been covertly selected | A: been correctly selected
161.5 NCE: No | A&E: Yes.
163.21 NCE: Timor Jack | A&E: Timor Tom
163.23 NCE: Tom | A&E: Jack
163.36 NCE: Church | A&E: Butler
164.21 NCE: others, | A&E: others
165.6 NCE: Chase | A&E: Chace
165.40 NCE: Chase's | A&E: Chace's
165.21 NCE&E: Commodore | A: commodore
167.1 NCE: over | A&E: on
168.41 NCE&E: stands | A: stand
171.8 NCE&E: modified by free will | A: directed by free will
171.35 NCE: steward!" | A&E: steward!
172.19 NCE&E: wide trowsers | A: wide black trousers
173.9 NCE&E: back!—Never heed | A: back!" [new ¶] "Never heed

173.11 NCE&E: sir," | A: sir,'
174.19 NCE: boys!)" | A&E: boys!")
175.17 NCE&E: along his oar! | A: along his oars!"
176.10 NCE&E: Though, | A: Though
176.10 NCE&E: truly, | A: truly
176.15 NCE: the second mate | A&E: the third mate
176.37 NCE: bade fair | A&E: bade far
176.41 NCE: eyes, | A&E: eyes
181.35 NCE: Until Archy's | A&E: Until Cabaco's
184.40 NCE: Tormentoso | A&E: Tormentoto
191.3 In the three printings of Ch. 54, the October 1851 *Harper's Monthly* and the American and English editions, which have separate authority, both double and single quotes are used *erroneously* to enclose the speeches of Ishmael and the young dons at the Golden Inn; they are also used *properly* to enclose the speeches of the men on the ship *Town-Ho*. In this NCE, the conversations at the Golden Inn are in double quotes and the conversations on the *Town-Ho* are in double and single quotes, to indicate that Ishmael is quoting their speeches. To avoid overwhelming this list, the numerous corrections of quotation marks in this chapter are not listed; they are listed together in the NN edition on pp. 918–919. A facsimile of the *Harper's* chapter is in Cornell University Library's Making of America Collection at ebooks.library.cornell.edu/m/moa/.
191.5 NCE: sail westward | A&E: sail eastward
191.28 NCE: Nantucketer | A&E: Vineyarder
192.14 NCE: birch canoe | A&E: beech canoe
192.18 NCE&E: (new ¶) Thus | A: Thus
194.2 NCE: sailor's talk | A&E: sailors' talk
196.9 NCE&H: plaza | A&E: plazza
197.43 NCE&E: boys' business | A: boy's business
199.41 Harper's: But all three | A&E: But all these
201.19 NCE: down beneath | A&E: down between
202.1–2 NCE: there she rolls! Jesu! what a whale!' It was Moby Dick." [*Harper's* reading except final double quote] | A&E: there she rolls!" Jesu, what a whale! It was Moby Dick.
202.11 NCE&E: up | A: up up
202.12 NCE&E: Now, | A: Now.
204.34 NCE&E: honor, | A: honor
212.45 NCE&E: else—so chance-like are such observations of the hills—your precise | A: else so chance-like are such observations of the hills, that your precise
216.45 NCE&E: Pontoppidan | A&E: Pontoppodan
217.27 NCE: twelve | A&E: twenty
218.46 NCE&E: horrible contortions | A: horrible contortion
222.11 NCE&E: bowsman; | A: bowsman!
222.45 NCE: said Tashtego | A&E: said Daggoo
227.3 NCE&E: time, | A: time |
227.43 NCE&E: "Dough you is | A: "Do you is
228.3 NCE&E: yourselbs | A: yoursebls
228.14 NCE&E: 'em | A: em
228.23 NCE: till dey bust | A: 'till dey bust

228.27 NCE&E: 'dention | A: dention
228.44 NCE&E: 'noder | A: noder
229.24 NCE: 'tall | A: t'all
231.38 NCE: formerly | A&E: formally
232.10 NCE&E: two and two, | A: two and two
232.10 NCE&E: hour | A: hour,
239.4 NCE&E: lives in matter | A: lives on matter
239.9 NCE&E: stranger's | A: strangers'
244.6 NCE: skirt | A&E: shirt
246.9 NCE&E: the sort of bellows by which he blows back the breath | A: the sort of bitters by which he blows back the life
249.32 NCE&E: lets | A: let's
257.4 NCE: Sais? | A&E: Lais?
257.35 NCE&E: irrecoverably lost | A: irrevocably lost
262.12 NCE: Good | A&E: God
262.39 NCE: on the now | A&E: in the now
263.30 NCE: false brow | A&E: false bow
267.10 NCE: Fiercely but evenly, | A: Fiercely, but evenly
267.25 NCE&E: diagonally | A&E: diagonically
277.9 NCE&E: 1850 | A: 1851
278.40 NCE: necessities, | A: necessities
287.16 NCE&E: *gallied** |A: gallied
287.40–52 NCE&E: (The whole footnote to the word *gallied*) | A: (not present)
289.38 NCE: still, becharmed | A&E: still becharmed
295.28–30 NCE&E: northern seas, they (the plaintiffs) had succeeded in harpooning the fish; but at last, through peril of their lives, were obliged to forsake, not only their lines, but their boat itself,—Furthermore: ultimately | A: Northern seas; and when indeed they (the plaintiffs) had succeeded in harpooning the fish; they were at last, through peril of their lives, obliged to forsake not only their lines, but their boat itself. Ultimately
295.33 NCE&E: plaintiffs;—Yet again:—and when | A: plaintiffs. And when
295.36 NCE&E: and boat, all of which | A: and boat, which
295.37 NCE&E: Wherefore, | A: Wherefore
295.44–45 NCE&E: possession of her. He then proceeded to say that, | A: possession of her. Erskine was on the other side; and he then supported it by saying, that
296.16 NCE&E: Now, the defendants afterwards took | A: Now the plaintiffs afterwards took
298.38 NCE: Plowden | A&E: Plowdon
298.45 NCE&E: Y^{e} | A: Ye
298.45 NCE&E: is y^{e} | A: is ye
298.46 NCE&E: that y^{e} | A: that you
298.46 NCE&E: y^{e} | A: ye
299.18 NCE&E: denying that | A: denying not
301.47 NCE: Stubb augured | A&E: Stubb argued
307.16 NCE: man loves | A&E: man loved
307.40 NCE&E: such considerateness towards | A: such considerations towards

310.33 NCE: assistant's | A&E: assistants'
311.3 NCE&E: King Asa | A: king asa
315.20 NCE: CLEANING UP | A&E: CLEARING UP
317.37 NCE&E: flow. | A: flows.
319.17 NCE&E: almanack; | A: almanack
319.22 NCE&E: the Bull;—| A: the Bull
319.22 NCE&E: Jimini | A: Jimimi
320.4–5 NCE: and, to wind up, | A: and to wind up
321.2 NCE: Hark!" | A: Hark!
326.30 NCE: 1788 | A&E: 1778
327.2 NCE: testing cruise | A&E: tasting cruise
329.31 NCE&E: untrussing the points of his hose | A: untagging the points of his hose
333.12 NCE&E: the embryo hull | A: the hull
335.6 NCE&E: ante-chronical | A: antichronical
335.39 NCE&E: ante-chronical | A: antichronical
336.5–6 NCE&E: Pharaohs' | A: Pharaoh's
337.21 NCE&E: Cook's | A: Cooke's
337.22 NCE: Swedish | A&E: Danish
337.23 NCE: reydar-fiskur | A&E reydan-siskur
339.8 NCE: Horto | A: Harto
342.12 NCE&E: Stubb longs | A&E: Stubb longed
342.13 NCE: oar | A: oar;
345.34 NCE&E: proud as a Greek god | A: proud as Greek god
348.3 NCE: the circumstances | A&E: the circumstance,
349.28–29 NCE&E: milky way—after saying this he added | A: milky way. He added
357.42 NCE: "Oh, grassy . . . learn it" | A&E: Oh, grassy . . . learn it
358.30 NCE: her mast-heads | A&E: her mast-head
361.5 NCE: power! | A&E: power?
361.6 NCE: striveth, this one jetteth | A&E: striveth, this one jettest
362.22 NCE&E: Now, sometimes, in | A: Now, in
362.35 NCE&E: unearthly passionlessness | A: earthly passionlessness
363.37 NCE: die in it | A&E: die it
365.8 NCE&E: "Yes | A: Yes
365.47 NCE&E: To sailors, oaths | A: to sailors' oaths
366.3 NCE&E: Tekel, | A: Tekel
366.21 NCE&E: to look | A: too look
367.47 NCE: 'tis | A&E: t'is
371.46 NCE&E: if——" | A: if"——
373.23 NCE&E: were braced hard up | A: were hard up
373.38 NCE&E: fain | A: feign
376.4–5 NCE: Reward for Pip! One hundred pounds of clay—| A&E: One hundred pounds of clay reward for Pip;
376.12 NCE&E: intently | A: intenting
378.19 NCE: it's undignified | A&E: its undignified
379.45 NCE&E: out of my sight." | A: out of sight."
380.10 NCE: deaf | A&E: dumb
382.2 NCE: boats' crews | A&E: boat's crews
390.21 NCE&E: "Is it Ahab, Ahab?" | A: "Is Ahab, Ahab?"
390.31 NCE&E: air | A: airs

390.37 NCE&E: mate | A: Mate
392.24 NCE&E: fowls | A: fowels
392.37–38 NCE&E: once laving him | A: once leaving him
392.40 NCE&E: that serenity | A: this serenity
393.17 NCE&E: could perceive | A: could discover
395.7 NCE&E: prow was pointed | A: prows were pointed
398.32 NCE: guiltlessness | A&E: guiltiness
401.14 NCE&E: boats' | A: boat's
402.15 NCE&E: feel brave, | A: feel brave
402.33 NCE&E: set due eastward | A: sat due eastward
403.3 NCE&E: turn to ice, | A: turned to ice,
403.6 NCE&E: Vesuvius' | A: Vesuvius
403.25 NCE&E: shift and swerve | A: swift and swerve
410.4 NCE&E: in his death-grasp, | A: in his death-gasp,

CONTEXTS

HERSHEL PARKER

Glimpses of Melville as Performer: Debater, Actor, Raconteur, Lecturer, Storyteller†

In *Moby-Dick*, one of the great narratives in world literature, Melville portrays a superb storyteller in action: Ishmael telling the wild story of a mutiny on the whaleship *Town-Ho* to a lounging circle of his elegant Spanish friends in Lima. In total control, Ishmael fends off some interruptions, grants additional information when appropriate, and offers brief asides. He denies an urgent request: the story of the white whale, he says, is too long for the present telling. As readers of *Moby-Dick*, we understand our privilege. Melville himself for many years was known among his acquaintances as a formidable public speaker and a master storyteller, so that criticisms of him as a lecturer, after the loss of his career as a writer and his once robust health, are painful to read. Yet there is testimony that he could, toward the end of the life, exert the charm and exuberance that marked his best years. Here are glimpses of Melville as performer during fifty years of his life.[1]

1837–1838 In the Auburn (New York) *American* on January 4, 1858, the editor William J. Moses announced that on the next night Melville would lecture before the "Young Men's Association" in Corning Hall on "Statues in Rome." Moses added: "That it will be a very attractive Lecture, we cannot doubt, for Mr. Melville is not only a man of great ability and fine taste, but a man who has gone over very much of the world with his eyes wide open." He then offered personal recollection of Melville in Albany around 1837:

> —Speaking of Mr. Melville, author of "Typee," and works of great interest and world-wide fame, reminds us of a portion of our rather juvenile acquaintance with him in Albany, of which city he is a native.
>
> There was formed there a debating Society, with the learned title of *"Philo Logos."* Melville was a prominent member, and active debater. The other leading member was our then cherished friend, Charles Van Loon, who afterwards became a Baptist clergyman, and died very suddenly of disease of the heart in Poughkeepsie, and on a Sunday. These twain were about all there was of the "Philo Logos" society.—It held its meetings weekly in a room in Stanwix Hall. The attendance was generally small, and the interest of all was almost cent[e]red in the debates between Van Loon and Melville, they being a tight match for each other, and delighting in nothing more than in being pitted against each other in an intellectual combat.[2]

† Compiled by the editor for this Norton Critical Edition from various sources, as identified.

1. Fittingly, in the first quarter of the 21st century *Moby-Dick* is being read aloud in many marathons and listened to in private even while one adaptation or another of *Moby-Dick* is being performed every week somewhere in the United States or abroad.
2. What survives of Van Loon's and Melville's youthful exchanges is preserved in the Albany *Microscope* (NN *Correspondence*, pp. 6–19, 551–64). Although dying at twenty-eight on December 22, 1847, Van Loon had become a powerful spokesman for the New York State Anti-Slavery Society. The orator at his funeral said Van Loon's "voice was lifted up in every association which contemplated the ultimate overthrow of intemperance, licentiousness, and slavery."

1838 Briefly in late 1838 and early 1839 Melville studied surveying and engineering at the Lansingburgh Academy near Troy, New York. In December 1838 he performed Shylock in scenes from Shakespeare's *Merchant of Venice*, as the Troy historian Frances Broderick and Harvard Librarian Dennis Marnon independently found in the *Democratic Press, and Lansingburgh Advertiser* for December 15, 1838:

> LANSINGBURGH ACADEMY.—On Wednesday evening last, pursuant to a public notice, we attended amid a large concourse of people, an Evening Exhibition of the students of Lansingburgh Academy. . . . The exercises concluded with the performance of several parts from Shakespear[e]'s "Merchant of Venice," in which all the characters were well sustained and in a manner entirely beyond expectation. Although it might appear inappropriate to particularize any or several of the performers, we cannot refrain from the gratification of adverting to the young gentleman who personated "Shylock" the Jew, as we conceive it a very difficult part, and the more so in one who never saw its representation, but from intuitive and reflective observation seemed to catch the spirit of the author, and in every act of attitude, gesture, expression, and intonation of voice, rivit the fixed attention of every member of the audience. Should a similar occasion again occur among the anniversary exercises of this institution we should hail the appearance of "Shylock" with increased pleasure, and exclaim in Shakespeare's own words: "His worth is warrant for his welcome here."[3]

1838 New York State Archivist Warren Broderick and Dennis Marnon independently found this article in the Troy *News*, January 1, 1865, under "'Burg' Items" (i.e., Lansingburgh items).

> LANSINGBURGH December 12: About twenty [really, 27] years ago Herman Melville, the author, trod the boards of the Academy Stage (not the Academy of Music, N. Y., but the Lansingburgh Academy) and sustained the part of Shylock in the "Merchant of Venice." The cast was a powerful one and included the whole strength of the Academy Company. Mr. Jos. Knickerbocker, was the Duke of Venice; Chandler McKelsey, the Prince of Morocco; James Lynch, the Prince of Arragon; George R. Walbridge took the part of Antonio; Hiram R. Hawkins did Bassanio; James J. Peck was Jessica, (daughter of Shylock,) and Ed. Wright was stage manager and promptor. The "Five Brothers," a band very much in vogue in 1844, dispensed the music, and the performance was a perfect success. Since that date, neither comedy, farce nor tragedy has been produced at the Academy, and the stage has been monopolized by small boys who, week after week, have recited, with their hands in their pockets, "On Linden when the sun was low," and "Not a drum was heard," and "The boy stood on the burning deck."

1847 On July 11 in New York City Melville regales Evert Duyckinck with an anecdote:[4]

3. What Silvia says when introduced to Proteus in *Two Gentlemen of Verona* 2.4.
4. Evert Duyckinck's diary, Duyckinck Collection, Rare Books and Manuscripts Division, New York Public Library. Transcribed by the editor of this Norton Critical Edition.

> A visit from Herman Melville with a picturesque account of Dr Judd at Lahaina, making up his diplomacy from fat natives lolling in the shade . . . [Effaced passage follows, indicating that the story was theologically if not also sexually daring.]

1849 On March 18 in Boston Richard Henry Dana Jr. writes to his brother Edmund, in Heidelberg:[5]

> Melville has made a visit here & I have passed two nights with him at Parker's.[6] . . . He is incomparable in dramatic story telling.

1849 Nathaniel Parker Willis in the New York *Home Journal* (October 13), just after Melville sailed for England:

> Herman Melville, with his cigar and his Spanish eyes, *talks* Typee and Omoo, just as you find the flow of his delightful mind on paper. Those who have only read his books know the man—those who have only seen the man have a fair idea of his books.

1851 On January 22[?] in Lenox after a visit from Melville, the Hawthornes look about for a war club:[7]

> Mrs. Hawthorne used to tell of one evening when he came in, and presently began to relate the story of a fight which he had seen on an island in the Pacific, between some savages, and of the prodigies of valor one of them performed with a heavy club. The narrative was extremely graphic; and when Melville had gone, and Mr. and Mrs. Hawthorne were talking over his visit, the latter said, "Where is that club with which Mr. Melville was laying about him so?" Mr. Hawthorne thought he must have taken it with him; Mrs. Hawthorne thought he had put it in the corner; but it was not to be found. The next time Melville came, they asked him about it; whereupon it appeared that the club was still in the Pacific island, if it were anywhere.

1856 On October 1 in New York City Evert Duyckinck records in his diary a visit from Melville, after almost four years of estrangement following the insulting contract the Harpers offered for *Pierre* at the start of January 1852, Duyckinck's own horror at it when consulted, and Melville's writing into the manuscript his contempt for the Duyckinck brothers as champions of literary mediocrity in their Literary World." See p. 574, n. 7, and p. 626:

> Herman Melville passed the evening with me—fresh from his mountain charged to the muzzle with his sailor metaphysics and jargon of things unknowable. But a good stirring evening—ploughing deep and bringing to the surface some rich fruits of thought and experience—Melville instanced Rt Burton as atheistical[8]—in the exquisite irony of

5. Harvey D. Parker's basement restaurant at 4 Court Square, not the famous hotel he built later, nearby.
6. Reprinted in *The Melville Log*, p. 293.
7. Julian Hawthorne, *Nathaniel Hawthorne and His Wife* (Boston: James R. Osgood & Co., 1884), p. 407.
8. Robert Burton (1577–1640) was atheistical, Melville thought, in Burton's medical/philosophical text *The Anatomy of Melancholy* (1621).

his passages on some sacred matters; cited a good story from the Decameron the *Enchantment* of the husband in the tree;[9] a story from judge Edmonds[1] of a prayer meeting of female convicts at Sing Sing which the Judge was invited to witness and agreed to, provided he was introduced where he could not be seen. It was an orgie of indecency and blasphemy. Said of Bayard Taylor[2] that as some augur predicted the misfortunes of Charles I from the infelicity of his countenance so Taylor's prosperity 'borne up by the Gods' was written in his face.[3]

1857 In Lawrence, Massachusetts, on November 23 Melville reads his lecture on "Statuary in Rome," a benefit at City Hall for the Lawrence Provident Association (for relief of the poor) as reported in the Lawrence *Courier*, November 25, 1857:

The lecture delivered on Monday evening last, by Herman Melville, although much of it was spoken so low that a large part of the audience could not hear it, was a delightful entertainment to those who were more favorably placed or endowed with a keener sense of hearing. . . .

Of the style, nervous and vigorous, yet easy and flowing, and falling constantly into the most melodious cadences; it can only be said in dispraise that it was perhaps too highly wrought, and too uniformly excellent. But this is a fault easily pardoned in these days of slip shod, newspaper, stump speech and small talk writing in all departments. Though bearing more the stamp of the polished essay, to be enjoyed by the scholar in the seclusion of his study, than of the Lyceum Lecture, to beguile the tediousness of an hour, and provoke a smile from jaded and listless auditors; yet there were many expressions eminently *lecturesque*, showing the true artistic perception of that mental perspection [sic] which presents an idea in such a manner as to be properly appreciated from a distant stand point, and at a hurried glance. . . .

The Lecturer, like many others unacquainted, with our City Hall, was baffled by its echoes. Though endowed with a voice which could shake its roof, he feared to speak too loud, lest he should be out-shouted by the mocking walls, and the consequence was that he spoke so low, in general, as to be heard with difficulty except by those on the front seats.

The rain, which fell in torrents, accompanied by thunder and lightning, detained [an unidentified scrapbook copy in the Lawrence Public Library reads "deterred"] many from attending, and many who came got thoroughly wet.

1858 On January 6 the Auburn (New York) *Daily Advertiser* notes:

Our cotemporary, the [Auburn] American, was good enough to inform us, in a little bit of reminiscence, that Mr. Melville once belonged to a

9. In the *Decameron* of Giovanni Boccaccio (1313–1375), the story of the jealous blind husband with a wife who commits adultery in a pear tree.
1. Judge John W. Edmonds (1799–1874), a former New York state prison inspector.
2. Bayard Taylor (1825–1878), Pennsylvania poet, travel writer, and novelist. At the request of the hostess Anne Lynch he wrote a valentine for Melville in 1848 (printed in N. P. Willis's *Home Journal* on March 4, 1848).
3. Duyckinck puts "borne up by the gods" in quotation marks to show that Melville used this striking phrase; no earlier use has been found, so Melville himself was probably not quoting or using a common phrase.

debating club. . . . It is to be regretted that Mr. Melville's connection with this distinguished society, and his intimate terms with his equally distinguished associates, most signally failed to improve his elocution.

The lecture was completely, absolutely spoiled by his inexcusable blundering, sing song, monotonous delivery. It was the most complete case of infanticide we ever heard of; he literally strangled his own child. The words came through his moustache about as loud and with as much force as the creaking of a field mouse through a thick hedge. Finely formed and well rounded sentences were articulated so feebly that they died long before they reached a twelfth part of his audience, and beautiful poetical quotations fell still-born from his lips. . . . The same lecture in the hands of a [Edwin H.] Chapin, a [George W.] Bethune, or [Henry Ward] Beecher, would have been considered brilliant and fascinating.—As it is, however, it must be placed among the "lost arts."

1858 In Yonkers, New York, on December 6 Melville begins his second lecture season by reading his "South Seas" lecture before the Yonkers Library Association:

Before last Monday evening . . . we doubt whether [Melville] was recognized as a humorist, His success in this field, if it be newly tried, is such as should encourage him, for his audience was not only large, but very sympathetic. . . . The facetious tone of Mr. Melville is beyond description. . . .

Mr. Melville's delivery is any thing but pleasant. To use a common simile, the close of his sentences have a descending and rising cadence, which can be likened to nothing on earth but the graceful twist in a porcine after part . . . his voice is susceptible of a modulation, which cannot be acquired without much care. (Yonkers *Examiner*, December 9)

February 8, 1859 In New York Melville's first cousin Henry Gansevoort writes to Kate Gansevoort:[4]

My dear Sister

Last night Herman Melvilles lecture was delivered at the rooms of the Historical Society, Gov. Bradish[5] in the chair. The subject was the South Seas and I assure you it was a treat long to be remembered. The rooms were about half filled owing to the want of proper advertising but those who were present evinced their gratification by applause and attention. He treated the subject in so unpretentious a manner, so originally and so carelessly if I may say so that I assure you it was really refreshing. Its very simplicity was its success. He spoke ably for one hour of the phenomena of those unfrequented regions, of the rare birds, luxuriant vegitation, uncouth monsters and peculiar fishes of those isles and seas that are called south only because from the isthmus of Darien the ocean *seems* to flow southerly. He presented the habits of the islanders, their

4. NYPL-GL Box 215. Gansevoort-Lansing Collection, Rare Books and Manuscripts Division, New York Public Library. Transcribed by the editor of this Norton Critical Edition.
5. Lieutenant Governor Luther Bradish (1783–1863) was president of the New-York Historical Society.

religion their tattoing—their dispositions and their institutions in such glowing and gentle colors that every mind seemed to quit its local habitation the while for a short journey through the countries he described.—

It was in Cousin Hermans true vein. He was emphatically himself, and the lecture was to me like a quantity tied together of his vivid and colloquial sketches (always too short) told under the inspiration of Madeira after dinner or drawn forth by some proper association elsewhere. He should be invited to deliver it at Albany.

1865 Charles Hemstreet in *The Critic*, July–December, 1903:[6]

To recite the names of these Sunday-evening callers [at the salon of Alice and Phoebe Cary][7] would be to recall all the writers in the city at that time, and to mention all those prominent in the world of letters who came from out of town. . . . Herman Melville was invited to the Twentieth Street house at the time when he was at work on his *Battle Pieces*, and could look back on years of adventure by land and by sea, and on the hardships that had supplied him with the material from which to write so much that was odd and interesting. At one of these Sunday-night receptions, at which Alice Cary introduced him first, Melville told the company, and told it far better than he had ever written anything (at least so one of his hearers has recorded), the story of that life of trial and adventure. He began at the beginning, telling of his boyhood in New York, of his shipping as a common sailor, and of his youthful wanderings in London[8] and Liverpool. In true sailor fashion, and with picturesque detail, he spun the tale of his eighteen months' cruise to the sperm fisheries in the Pacific, and held his hearers' close attention while he related the coarse brutality of his captain, who had forced him to desert at the Marquesas Islands. Then he traced his wanderings with his one companion through the trackless forest on the island of Nukahiva and of his capture by the Typee cannibals. He related how there was little hope in his heart that he could ever escape, but that he still held tight to life and his courage did not desert him; how with the thought of death before him by night and by day he yet hourly studied the strange life about him and garnered those facts and fancies which he afterwards used to such advantage in his successful *Typee*. It was a thrilling tale to listen to, in strange contrast to his hum-drum later life when he was an employee of the New York Custom House. When you go to see the home of the Cary sisters, walk on a few blocks to East Twenty-sixty Street, and there see the house numbered 104. On this site stood Melville's house, where he lived for many years and where, when he had come to be an old man, he died.

1886 Glens Falls, New York, July? 1886: While nominally helping his sister Helen close up the family house in Gansevoort, Melville drove to

6. Reprinted in Hemstreet's *Literary New York: Its Landmarks and Associations* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1903), pp. 223–26.
7. Alice Cary (1820–1871) and Phoebe Cary (1824–1871), Ohio poets who for years hosted a Sunday salon in New York City, often with unconventional guests. This is the only known record of a connection between them and Melville.
8. If Melville indeed said that he went to London in 1839, as his Redburn does, it may be true.

Glens Falls to a barber shop while the young Ferris Greenslet (1875–1959), later an editor of the *Atlantic Monthly,* listened:[9]

> In the summer of 1887, or it may have been 1886, I, at the age of 12, or possibly 11, went down from Lake George to Glens Falls to have my hair cut. Soon after I was installed in the chair a buggy drove up and made a dashing stop, and after hitching the horse the driver came into the shop to have his whiskers trimmed, announcing that he had driven up from Gans[e]voort, some eight or nine miles, in a flat hour. Clad in a blue double-breasted suit of a seagoing flavor, he was seventy-ish, with a lot of hair and beard well grizzled, a vigorous body, "plump sphericity,"[1] a well tanned countenance, a bright and roving eye, all making up a singularly vital and impressive personality. I remember no one that I have met in the fifty odd years since more vividly.
>
> As the barber began his operations, having apparently administered to his patient before, he said, "Tell us some more about those adventures you had in the South Seas when you were a boy." Whereupon he began a flow of joyous narrative, which I did not identify with TYPEE until nearly half a century later.
>
> The thing went on better and better until after my own job was finished, and I continued to listen spellbound. The climax came when the barber inquired:
>
> "Weren't there any girls down there?"
>
> "My God!" said the whiskerando, "I'll say there were! I went back to the island a couple of years after I left there on board a man-of-war and the first thing I saw when I went ashore was my own little son about a year and a half old running around naked in the sun on the beach."
>
> "How did you know it was your son?" asked the barber.
>
> "He had to be," said the story teller. "He carried his bowsprit to starboard!"[2]
>
> These, I assure you, were his *ipsissima verba*.[3] On the surface of him at least there was every indication of a central *joie de vivre*, which is not without interest considering that just at that time he must have begun writing, or at any rate thinking about, BILLY BUDD.

9. Letter from Ferris Greenslet to Willard Thorp, November 22, 1946, after Greenslet had seen Thorp's 1938 *Herman Melville: Representative Selections*. Greenslet explained, "I have thought you might be interested in an anecdote from one who once saw Melville plain." Thorp in the 1960s donated the letter to the Newberry Library for use of the Melville Project. Transcribed by Harrison Hayford with permission of the Greenslet Estate and the Newberry Library.
1. An allusion to Melville's letter to Evert Duyckinck on February 12, 1851, in which he said Hawthorne needed "roast-beef, done rare"—words Greenslet saw in Thorp's 1938 *Herman Melville: Representative Selections* (p. 386). Seeing Melville "plain" is a reference to Robert Browning's awe in "Memorabilia" at someone who had seen Percy Shelley plain, in the flesh.
2. To explain the story is to risk ruining the humor. In the South Seas the boy would have been naked or nearly so. The bragging old man exposes himself as a great tease, undercutting his entire story as the auditors realize that the "son" would not have worn tailor-made pantaloons in which his genitals were pushed to the same side, presumably, as Melville's own (the right). Even earlier than *Typee*, and all through his life, Melville liked to tease his auditors.
3. Exact words.

Whaling and Whalecraft

Glossary of Nautical Terms†

To preserve something of the tang of nautical idioms contemporary with Melville, and to avoid introducing anachronistic definitions, we have drawn on nineteenth-century dictionaries of sea terms in compiling this glossary, mainly Richard Henry Dana's *The Seaman's Friend* (Boston, 1856, 8th Edition), W. H. Smyth's *Sailor's Word-Book* (London, 1867), and W. Clark Russell's *Sailor's Language* (London, 1883). We have not included every nautical term in *Moby-Dick* (notably those like "pitch-poling" and "waif pole" that Melville defines himself), and we have defined a few words *not* in *Moby-Dick*, because they occur in definitions of other words. Not all the meanings given here are exactly those carried by the terms in *Moby-Dick*: Melville uses some of these words, like "grapnels" or "slip the cable," metaphorically; and he sometimes invests the *Pequod* with unusual properties, such as a tiller made not of wood or metal but of bone.

abaft Toward the stern of a vessel; behind (Anything behind another thing is called *abaft* it. Russell).

abeam In a line at right angles to the vessel's length. Smyth.

aft Toward the hinder part of a ship (the stern).

a-lee the helm So place the helm that the rudder is brought on the weather side of the stern-post. Smyth.

alow A term sometimes but very rarely used for *below*, and then perhaps only for the sake of alliteration, as "She had studding-sails aloft and alow." Russell.

articles A ship's articles are the document in which are recorded the names and signatures of the crew, their wages, the food to be given, etc. Russell.

athwart Across.

athwartships Across the ship, or across anything; opposed to fore-and-aft.

avast An order to stop hauling or heaving, or to stop doing anything.

avast heaving The cry to arrest the capstan when any impediment occurs in heaving the cable, not infrequently when a hand, foot, or finger, is jammed;—stop! Smyth.

azimuth compass An instrument for finding the magnetic azimuth or amplitude of a heavenly object. Russell.

† Compiled by Hershel Parker and Harrison Hayford for the first edition of this volume. The glossary has been updated by the editor for this edition.

back (to back a sail) To brace its yard so that the wind may blow directly on the front of the sail, and thus retard the ship's course. Smyth.

backstay A rope to support a mast and leading down abaft it to the side of the vessel. Russell.

ballast Heavy material, as iron, lead, or stone, placed in the bottom of the hold, to keep a vessel from upsetting. Dana.

bank A seat.

batten down The hatches [hatchways] are said to be *battened down* when they are covered up with gratings or hatches, and tarpaulins which are secured by battens [pieces of wood or iron] to prevent them from being washed away. Russell.

battering-ram A large piece of timber, armed at each end with iron caps and fitted with ropes. It is used for removing the angular blocks when a docked ship is sitting on them. Russell.

before the mast Living in the forecastle, serving as a "common sailor." Russell.

belay To make a rope fast by taking a turn with it over a belaying-pin. Russell.

belaying pins Iron, brass, or wooden bars tapered, placed in holes in rails, hoops, etc., to make the running gear [running ropes] fast to. Russell.

bells The denoting of time on board ship [by striking a bell every half hour]. Eight bells signify noon or midnight, eight or four o'clock; half-past twelve, one bell; one o'clock, two bells; half-past one, three bells, and so on to eight bells. [To make eight bells a single bell is sounded eight times with a pause after each two strikes.] Russell.

bend To attach. To *bend a sail* is to attach it to the yard. Russell.

binnacle A stand or box of brass or wood in which a compass is placed. Russell.

binnacle lamp A lamp to throw light upon the compass-card. Smyth.

block A piece of wood with sheaves, or wheels, in it, through which the running rigging passes, to add to the purchase. Dana.

bluff A term applied to a ship's bows, and meaning full and square. Russell.

boat hook A pole furnished with an iron hook and spike for shoving off or holding on to an object when in a boat. Russell.

boom A long spar run out to extend or boom out the foot of a particular sail. A ship is said to come booming forwards when she comes with all the sail she can make. Smyth.

bow The rounded part of a vessel, forward. Dana. [The *bows* of the ship are the sides at the stem, and for some way back.]

bowline A rope leading forward from the leech [the vertical edge] of a square sail, to keep the leech well out when sailing close-hauled. Dana.

bowman (also bowsman) The headmost rower in a boat. Russell.

bowsprit A large spar projecting over the bows.

braces The braces are ropes belonging to all the yards of a ship. Smyth. [Their function is to position the yards in the horizontal plane.]

brace sharp up To *brace up*, or *brace sharp up*, [is] to lay the yards more obliquely fore and aft, by easing off the weather-braces and hauling

in the lee ones, which enables a ship to lie as close to the wind as possible. Smyth.

breakers Small barrels for containing water or other liquids. Also, those billows which break violently over reefs, rocks, or shallows, lying immediately at, or under, the surface of the sea. Smyth.

breaking out The act of extricating casks or other objects from the hold-stowage. Smyth.

bring by the lee To incline so rapidly to leeward that the lee-side is unexpectedly brought to windward, and by laying the sails all aback exposes her to the danger of oversetting. Smyth.

bulkhead The bulkhead, afore, is the partition between the forecastle and gratings in the head. [Gratings are open wood-work of cross battens, forming the cover for the hatchways, and permitting light to enter the lower decks.] Smyth.

bull's-eye A sort of block without a sheave, for a rope to reeve through. Also, a hemispherical piece of ground glass of great thickness, inserted into small openings in the decks and scuttle-hatches, for admission of light below. Smyth.

bulwarks The protection around a vessel's weather deck, consisting of solid planking fixed to stanchions. Russell.

burton A kind of tackle. Dana.

capstan A barrel of wood or iron revolved by bars [used for lifting great weights]. Russell.

capstan-head The flat, circular top of the capstan, with square holes around its edge. Smyth.

carlines (carlings) Pieces of timber about five inches square, lying fore and aft, along from one beam to another. On and athwart these the ledges rest, whereon the planks of the deck and other portions of carpentry are made fast. Smyth.

chocks Wooden supports for the bottom of a boat to rest on while not in use. Russell.

chronometer A timepiece to indicate Greenwich mean time for the purpose of finding the longitude. Russell.

cleat (or cleet) A piece of wood used in different parts of a vessel to belay ropes to. Dana.

close-haul A vessel is close-hauled when she is sailing with her yards braced up so as to get as much as possible to windward; *full and by* is the same as close-hauled. Dana.

close-reefed When all the reefs of the top-sails are taken in. Smyth.

clumsy-cleat A knee-brace in the bow of a whale-boat. Russell.

companion-way The staircase to the cabin. Smyth.

compass-card The circular card attached to the needles of a mariner's compass on which are marked 32 points of the compass and the 360 degrees of the circle.

copper-bottomed Said of a wooden ship whose bottom is sheathed with copper. Russell.

cross-trees Cross-pieces of timber on top of the trestletrees [fore-and-aft pieces on each side of a mast]. Russell.

crowd To *crowd sail* is to set all sail. Russell.

crown That part of an anchor where the shank and arms meet. Russell.

cutting stages Platforms hung over the side for men to stand on while cutting in.

darbies Handcuffs.

dog-vane A small flag or streamer at the mast-head or at the side to indicate the direction of the wind. Russell.

double banked A boat is double banked when two oars, one opposite the other, are pulled by men seated on the same thwart. Dana.

douse To lower or slacken down suddenly; expressed of a sail in a squall of wind, an extended hawser, etc. Smyth.

drawing water The number of feet from the waterline to the lowermost part of the keel.

fiddle-head The head of a ship that has no figure, but is decorated with a scroll shaped like a fiddle. Russell.

fore The forward part of a vessel; opposed to aft.

forecastle deck The deck over the forecastle [the compartment where sailors live, in the bows of a ship]. Russell.

fore-mast The lower mast nearest the bows of a ship. Russell.

fore-scuttle A hatchway by which the forecastle is entered.

fore-topmast The second (higher) section of a sailing ship's foremast.

furl To roll up and bind a sail neatly on its respective yard or boom. Smyth.

gaff An instrument like a boat-hook used in the blubber-room of whalers; also, a spar used to extend the heads of fore-and-aft sails which are not set on stays. Russell.

galliots A Dutch or Flemish vessel for cargoes, with very rounded ribs and flattish bottom, with a mizenmast stept far aft, carrying a square-mainsail and main-topsail. Smyth.

gangway A part of the vessel's side, nearly amidships, by which people enter and leave a ship. Russell.

give way! An order to men who are rowing to pull with more force. Russell.

grapnel A sort of small anchor for boats, having a ring at one end, and four palmed claws at the other. Smyth.

gunwale The gunwale [pronounced gun'l] of a boat is a piece of timber going round the upper sheer-strake as a binder for its topwork. Smyth. [The sheer-strake is the line of plank on a vessel's side, running fore-and-aft under the gunwale. Dana.]

halyards (often halliards) The ropes or tackles used to hoist or lower sail. Smyth.

handspike A lever of wood used in heaving round a windlass [a large barrel, revolved by handles, on the forecastle, and used in getting up the anchor]. Russell.

hard a-lee "Hard a-lee!" means hard over—put the rudder as far as it will go to windward. Russell.

hatches Openings in the deck for admission into the interior of a ship. Also, the open wood-work of cross battens and ledges forming cover for the hatchways.

hatchway A square or oblong opening in the middle of the deck of a ship, of which there are generally three—the fore, main, and after—affording passages up and down from one deck to another,

and again descending into the hold. The hatches of a smaller kind are distinguished by the name of *scuttles*. Smyth.

hawser A large rope used for towing, etc. Russell.

head The fore end of a ship.

headway A vessel's direct passage through the water. Russell.

head-wind A breeze blowing from the direction of the ship's intended course. Smyth.

heave down To drag one side of a ship down with tackles affixed to the mast-heads, in order to repair an injury which is below the water line on the other side. Smyth and Russell.

heave to To put a vessel in the position of *lying-to*, by adjusting her sails so as to counteract each other, and thereby check her way, or keep her perfectly still. In a gale, it implies to set merely enough sail to steady the ship. Smyth.

helm A term for all the steering arrangements of a ship. Russell.

helmsman Steersman.

hold The interior of a vessel, where the cargo is stored. Dana.

jib A large triangular sail, set on a stay, forward. Smyth.

jib boom A spar run out forward as an extension of the bowsprit.

jib-stay A stay is a rope that supports a mast by leading forward; a jib-stay is the stay on which the jib is set.

jury-mast A temporary mast to replace one that has been lost. Russell.

keel The lowest and principal timber of a vessel, running fore-and-aft its whole length, and supporting the whole frame. It is composed of several pieces, placed lengthwise, and scarfed and bolted together. Dana.

kelson (often keelson) An internal keel, laid upon the middle of the floor-timbers, immediately over the keel, and serving to bind all together by means of long bolts driven from without, and clinched on the upper side of the keelson. Smyth.

kentledge Pieces of iron for ballast, usually laid over the kelson-plates. Russell and Smyth.

knight-heads Timbers next to the stem [the foremost piece uniting the bows of a ship], the ends of which come up through the deck and form a support for the bowsprit. Russell and Smyth.

lanyards Ropes rove through dead-eyes (holes in wooden discs) for setting up rigging. Also, a rope made fast to anything to secure it, or as a handle. Dana.

larboard The left side of a vessel, looking forward. Same as port.

lead line A line attached to a leaden weight and used for ascertaining the depth of water. Russell.

league Three nautical miles, or 3041 fathoms. Smyth.

lee (or leeward) The side opposite to that from which the wind is blowing. *Lee-shore* means the wind is blowing toward the shore, which is on the lee side of the ship. Smyth.

lee-beam On the lee side of the ship, at right angles with the keel. Smyth.

lee way What a vessel loses by drifting to leeward in her course. Smyth.

lifts Ropes which reach from each mast-head to their respective yard-arms to steady and suspend the ends. Smyth.

line-of-battle ships Before the days of ironclads, ships of seventy-four guns and upwards. Russell.

loggerhead A sort of post fitted to a whaling-boat's bottom and rising about two feet above the level of the stern platform. Russell.

log-line A line wound on a reel. At the end of the line is a piece of wood with a peg in it called a [log or] logship. On the logship being thrown overboard the velocity with which the vessel leaves it astern is measured by a sand glass which runs a certain number of seconds. Russell.

lubber An awkward unseamanlike fellow. Smyth.

lubber's hole An aperture in the tops so called because raw hands [being timid climbers] prefer to creep through it to going over the shroud. Russell.

luff To luff is to bring a ship closer to the wind. Russell. A ship is close to the wind when her head is just so near the wind as to fill the sails without shaking them. Smyth.

lugger A small vessel with four-cornered cut sails, set fore-and-aft. Smyth.

main brace A purchase attached to the main-yard for trimming it to the wind. Smyth.

mainmast The second tallest mast located near the center of the ship.

main-royal mast The mast above the main-topgallant mast. Russell.

maintop A platform around the head of the lower section of the mainmast.

main-yard The lowest yard on the main-mast. Russell.

make To make is to descry. From Russell.

marline A kind of small line, composed of two strands very little twisted. Smyth.

marlingspike An iron pin, sharpened at one end, and having a hole in the other for a lanyard. Dana.

mast-head The portion of the mast above the top of the rigging. Russell.

midships The middle part of the vessel, either with regard to her length or breadth. Smyth.

mincing knives Knives for mincing the horse-pieces of blubber for the try-pots. Russell.

mizen-mast The mizen (mizzen) mast is the aftermost mast of a ship. Smyth.

muffled oars Oars are muffled by putting mats or canvass round their looms in the row-locks. (The loom is the part of the oar between the handle or grip and the blade.) Dana.

offing Distance from the shore. Russell.

orlop The lowest deck, consisting of a platform laid over the beams in the hold, whereon the cables [are] usually coiled. Smyth.

pennant In a whaleship, used to advertise the owner, the home port, or the name of the ship.

perch A pole stuck up on a shoal as a beacon; or a spar erected on or projected from a cliff whence to watch fish. Smyth.

pike A long, slender, round staff, armed at the end with iron. Smyth.

piled up A vessel is piled up when all sails are set.

plug-hole A hole in the bottom of a boat to let water drain out. Russell.

point of the compass The 32nd part of the circumference, or 11°15′. Smyth.

poop The aftermost and highest part of a large ship's hull. Smyth.

port-hole An aperture in a ship's side to point a gun through. A window for a cabin. Russell.

post-captain A [Royal Navy] captain of three years' standing. Smyth.

preventer A rope used as an additional support for masts, booms, etc. Russell.

proas [prahu, Malay for boat] The larger war-vessels among the Malays, ranging from 55 to 156 feet in length and carrying 76 to 96 rowers, with about 40 to 60 fighting men. Smyth.

prow The projecting front part of a ship; the bow.

purchase A mechanical power which increases the force applied. Dana.

quarter (on the quarter) 45° abaft the beam. Smyth.

quarter-boat A boat suspended on davits [curved iron bars affixed to a ship's sides] near the quarters [the after sides of a ship]. Russell.

quarter-deck That part of the upper deck which is abaft the mainmast. Smyth.

range Range alongside, to draw abreast. Russell.

razeed A ship is razeed when one entire deck is cut down. Russell.

reef To diminish the expanse of a sail by knotting the reef points in it upon the yard, or at the foot. Russell. A certain portion of a sail comprehended between the head of a sail and any of the reef-bands. The intention of each reef is to reduce the sail in proportion to the increase of the wind. Reef is also a group or continuous chain of rocks, sufficiently near the surface of the water to occasion its breaking over them. Smyth.

riggers Men who fit the standing ["permanent"] and running ["temporary"] rigging, or dismantle them. Smyth.

rigging Standing rigging consists of all those ropes which are fixed, such as shrouds, backstays, etc., running rigging of all those ropes which can be pulled upon, such as halliards, clew-lines, etc. Russell.

ring-bolt An iron bolt with an eye at one end, wherein is fitted a circular ring. Smyth.

round-house A cabin built on deck roofed by the poop. Russell.

rowlocks (rollocks) Places cut in the gunwale of a boat for the oar to rest in while pulling. Dana.

royal masthead The upper end of the topmost mast of a ship, unless skysail masts are carried.

royal yard The yard above the topgallant yard to which the royal sail is bent [to bend a sail is to attach it to a yard]. Russell.

run The hollow curving in a vessel's bottom that rises and narrows under the quarters. Dana.

scud To drive before a gale, with no sail, or only enough to keep the vessel ahead of the wind. Also, low, thin clouds that fly swiftly before the wind. Dana.

scuppers The gutter of a ship's decks; the water-ways. Russell.

scuttle A small hole or port cut either in the deck or side of a ship, generally for ventilation. That in the deck is a small hatch-way. Smyth.

scuttle-butt A cask on deck in which fresh water is kept. Russell.
seas Waves (as in "three seas off").
seize To seize is to make a thing fast, by securing it to a place; as to seize a flag in the rigging. Russell.
seizings The seizings are lines with which anything is made fast.
sheave The wheel inside a block which revolves with the rope that is hauled through it. Russell.
sheet home To extend the sheets [the ropes fastened to one or both the lower corners of a sail] to the outer extremities of the yards. Smyth.
shiver To shiver a ship is to trim a ship's yards so that the wind strikes on the edges of the sails, making them flutter in the wind. The same effect may be intentionally produced by means of the helm. Smyth.
shorten sail To reduce [take in some of, or reef some of] the sails that are set. Smyth.
shrouds A set of ropes reaching from the mast-heads to the vessel's sides, to support the masts. Dana.
sky-larking Horse-play. Russell.
skysail A small square sail set above a royal sail.
skysail-pole A mast on which the sky-sail yard travels. It is a continuation of the royal mast. Russell.
slip the cable To *slip*, is to let go the cable with a buoy on the end, and quit the position, from any sudden requirement, instead of weighing the anchor. Smyth.
soundings To be off soundings is to be in water whose bottom cannot be reached by the [line and] lead. [Or, to be within soundings is to be in water shallow enough for the depth to be measured thus; hence, to know where the ship is.] Russell.
spar Any kind of mast, boom, etc. Russell.
spile A small wooden pin. Smyth.
splice To join two untwisted ends of rope together.
sprung spar A spar is *sprung* when the fibres of the wood are injured by straining. Russell.
square yards Literally, when the yards lie fair upon the masts exactly athwartships, but the term is also applied to very long yards. Russell.
stand by! The order to be prepared to do something. Smyth.
stand by the braces! The order to take hold of the braces (preparatory to executing some further order). Smyth.
starboard The right-hand side of a vessel (as one faces toward the bow).
star-bolins (or star-boleens) The old familiar term for the men of the starboard watch. Smyth.
stay A supporting rope that leads forward from the upper end of the mast (the shrouds extend not forward but on each side). Russell.
stem-piece The foremost timber fastening together the bows of a ship.
stern The back or aft-most part of a ship.
storm-trysail A fore-and-aft sail, hoisted by a gaff, but having no boom at its foot, and used only in foul weather. Smyth.
strike To strike is to lower anything.

strike down To lower casks, etc., into the hold. Smyth.
stun' sails Fine-weather sails set outside the squaresails. Smyth.
sway up To apply a strain on a mast-rope in order to lift the spar upwards, so that the fid may be taken out, previous to lowering the mast. [A fid is a square bar of wood or iron, with a shoulder at one end, used to support the weight of the topmast when erected at the head of the lower mast.] Smyth.
tackle (Pronounced tay-cle.) A purchase, formed by a rope rove through one or more blocks. Dana.
taffrail The upper part of a ship's stern, a curved railing, the ends of which unite to the quarter-pieces. Smyth.
tell-tale A compass hanging face downwards from the beams in the cabin, showing the position of the vessel's head. Smyth.
thole-pins Pins in the gunwale of a boat serving to retain the oars in position when pulling. Smyth.
thwart A rower's seat in an open boat—so called because the thwart lies athwart, or across, the boat.
tierce A cask of beef. Russell.
tiller A piece of timber or metal fitted upon the rudder-head fore-and-aft and used for steering. Russell.
timber heads The heads of the timbers that rise above the decks and are used for belaying hawsers, large ropes, etc. Smyth.
toggery Garments.
top-blocks Large single iron-bound blocks used for sending top-masts up or down. Russell.
topgallant-mast The third mast above the deck; the uppermost before the days of royals and flying kites. Smyth.
top-gallant sails The third sails above the decks. Smyth.
top-maul A large hammer used by riggers. Russell.
top-sails The second sails above the decks. Smyth.
transom Timbers bolted to a ship's stern-post for receiving the ends of deck planks; a crossbeam attached to the stern-post and used as a seat.
tree-nails Long cylindrical oak pins driven through the planks and timbers of a vessel to connect her various parts. Smyth.
trim dish To adjust a vessel's posture properly. Russell.
trucks Circular [wooden] caps on the upper mastheads. Smyth.
trysail A fore-and-aft sail, set with a boom and gaff, and hoisted on a small mast abaft the lower mast, called a *trysail-mast*. Dana.
turn to To go to work. To fall to. Russell.
under weight A ship is *under weight* when she has weighed [heaved up] her anchor; a ship *under way* is beginning to move under her canvas after her anchor is weighed. Smyth.
waist The deck between the main deck and the forecastle. Russell.
weather The opposite of lee—the windward side of a ship. Smyth.
weather-sheets Those fast to the weather-clues of the sails. [Clues are the lower corners of a square sail.] Smyth.
whip A single rope rove through a single block to hoist in light articles. Smyth.
windlass A large barrel, revolved by handles, on the forecastle, and used in getting up the anchor. Russell.

windlass-bitts The bitts [perpendicular pieces of timber going through the deck] which support the ends or spindles of the windlass. Smyth.

work A ship is said *to work* when she strains in a tempestuous sea, so as to loosen her joints. Smyth.

yard A long cylindrical timber suspended upon the mast of a vessel to spread a sail. Smyth.

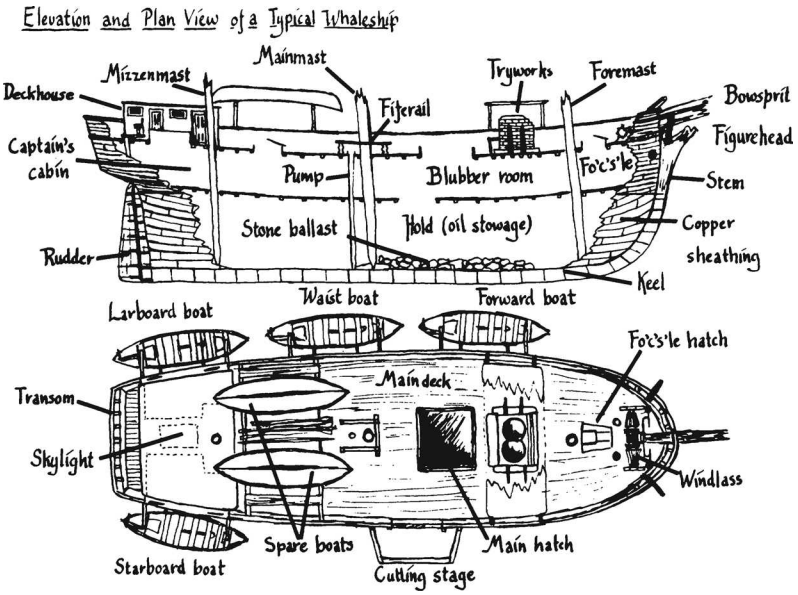
yaw The motion of a vessel when she goes off from her course. Dana.

JOHN B. PUTNAM

Whaling and Whalecraft: A Pictorial Account†

From its beginning, when Captain John Smith hunted whales along the New England coast under a crown permit in 1614, to its end, with the wreck of the bark *Wanderer* off Cuttyhunk in 1924, the American whale fishery was basically a struggle between men in wooden ships and boats against the world's largest mammals, inhabitants of an inhospitable ocean. The Cape Cod or Nantucket whaleman of the seventeenth century would have felt very much at home on the New Bedford barks of the early twentieth, for neither the sailing ship nor the craft of whaling had changed much during the intervening centuries.

There were, to be sure, modifications and refinements in ship design, whaleboat construction, and whaling weaponry, as the industry became increasingly standardized toward the end of the nineteenth century. In



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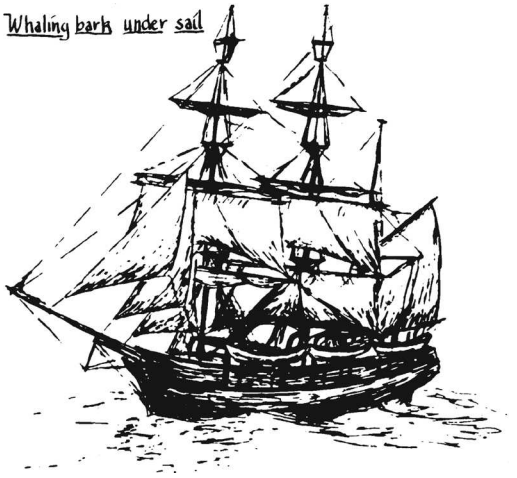
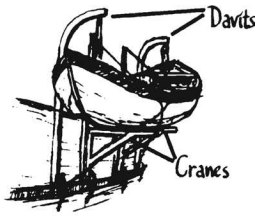


the 1840's, when Melville sailed in the *Acushnet*, American whaling was in its most striking period of transition: the Industrial Revolution made possible greater quantities of better harpoons, lances, whaleline, and the like; and the growing scarcity of skilled carpenters willing to go to sea made it necessary for whalers to carry better built boats, and more of them, against the inevitable destruction attendant upon the rigors of a whaling voyage. Accordingly, the following brief discussion of whaling and whalecraft will concentrate on whaling as Melville knew it and wrote of it; where possible, we shall refer to appropriate chapters in *Moby-Dick* for further detail.

The American whaleship, in the days when Ishmael embarked in the *Pequod*, was generally built especially for its task, but it was not uncommon to find vessels of exceptionally sturdy construction that had been converted from merchantman to whaler. The whaler, owing to the heavy stresses she was subjected to in "cutting-in" a whale and to the long periods she would spend at sea without opportunity for overhaul, had to be especially heavy-timbered and stoutly built. Both modern and contemporary writers have tended to regard the whaler as lubberly in appearance and design (see Melville's comments in Chapter 16), but it was generally the longevity and durability of these sturdy vessels that caused them to compare so unfavorably with the more modern—but shorter-lived—men of war and merchantmen with which they shared the seas.

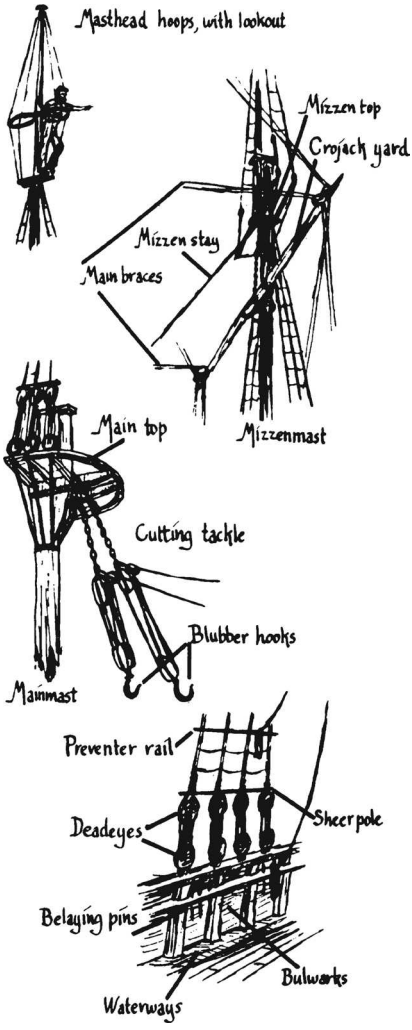
The whaler's cluttered superstructure and sparse spread of canvas also contributed to her awkward appearance. In order to allow more space below for barrels of oil, a deckhouse aft provided quarters for the mates, the harpooneers, the carpenter, the cooper, and the smith. Forward of this was a high decked-over framework, called the "gallows," for spare whaleboats. Just abaft the foremast stood the tryworks (Chapter 96), which had its own shelter. Finally, along the entire port side and aft on the starboard side were the towering davits from which were slung the whaleboats and the cranes which supported the keels of these lightly-built craft. There would generally be three boats on the port side and one on the starboard. Occasionally a large whaler would carry a fifth boat



Whaleboat slung from davits

forward on the starboard side, and very rarely another might be carried on "tail-feathers," or stern davits, across the transom.

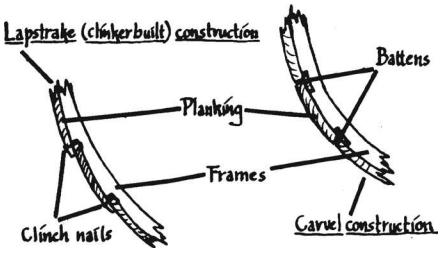
A whaler seldom carried as much sail as a merchantman of equal tonnage, for a variety of reasons; first of all, it was necessary to keep the rig short and simple in order that it might be handled safely and quickly by the small force of shipkeepers—usually no more than six men—left aboard when the boats were away on the chase. Then too, sails were costly and subject to considerable wear during a three- or four-year voyage, and owners and officers alike were reluctant to spend hard-earned cash on the luxury of unnecessary canvas. Finally, since there was no pressure on a whaler to get anywhere in a great hurry, only sufficient sail was carried to maintain steerageway and to run down to faraway boats after a long chase to leeward. On a passage to or from the whaling grounds, a whaler might carry royals or skysails to save time, but while cruising on the grounds and seeking whales, these upper sails were unbent and the spars unrigged, and the whaler would loaf along under top sails and topgallantsails.



Four features in particular were unique to the rigging of the whaler. The most conspicuous of these were the masthead hoops in which the lookouts stood during the daylight hours to watch

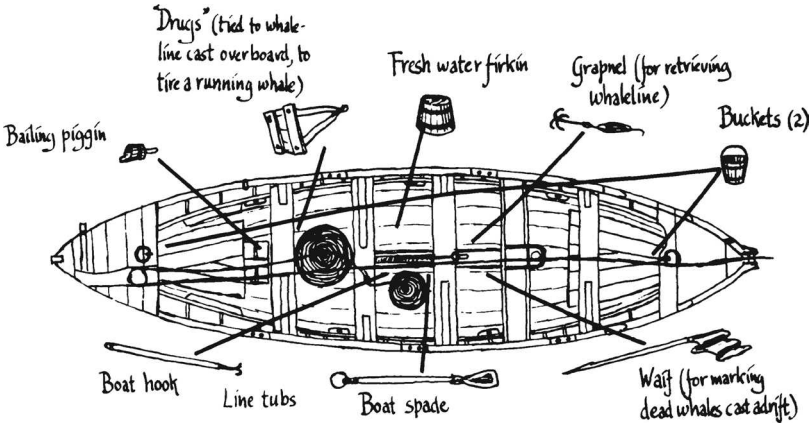
for whales (see Chapter 35). Then there was the cutting-in tackle, consisting of four large double blocks assembled in two falls, and the attached blubber hooks. This assembly was suspended below the maintop, just forward of the main yard; it was used in stripping the blubber from a whale's carcass while cutting-in alongside. Less noticeable were the preventer pin rails, mounted in the standing rigging several feet above deck level. The running rigging (lines used in setting sails and squaring yards), usually secured to belaying pins inside the main bulwarks, was belayed to these preventer rails while cutting-in a whale to prevent its becoming fouled by the unwieldy blanket piece of blubber as it was hauled inboard by the cutting-in tackle. Finally, although most whaling vessels were bark-rigged—with no square yards on the mizzen mast—there was a short spar just below the mizzen top platform, called a crojack (originally crossjack), to which were led the main braces, which on vessels other than whalers were led to the deck aft. This peculiarity, like the preventer pin rails, was designed to keep the braces clear of the deck area and superstructure.

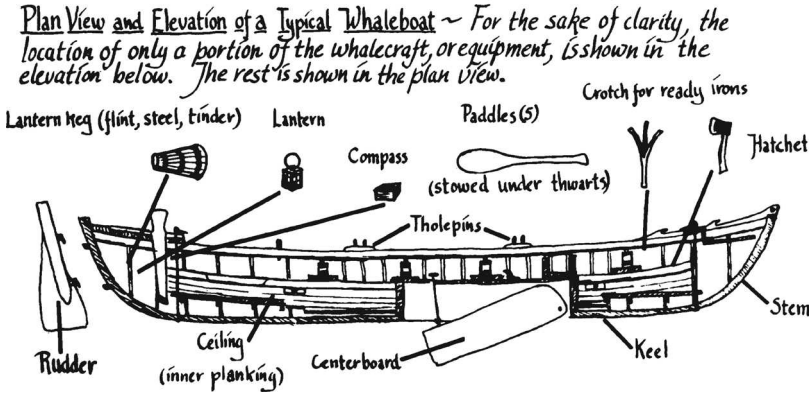
The American whaleboat was perhaps the most nearly perfect seagoing small craft ever developed. Combining the lightness and streamlining of the Indian canoe, on which it was patterned, with the strength and durability of the wooden boat, it was unequalled in speed and seaworthiness. Its lines have survived essentially intact in the whaleboats and motor whaleboats used by the seamen of a nuclear age.



During Melville's years at sea, the whaleboat was undergoing a transition; although essentially unchanged in size and hull form, the whaleboat of the second half of the nineteenth century differed from that of the first in having a centerboard and in being carvel-built, as opposed to clinker-built (see drawing). Minor changes included the substitution of metal oarlocks for the older tholepins, and more sophisticated means of stepping, or raising, the mast.

The boat was built of cedar planking on a temporary form, and light steam-bent ribs of oak or ash were sprung in to give the hull transverse strength. The thwarts and their "knees" added strength also. Since the hull was still relatively limber, however, special supports called "cranes" cradled the keel when the boat was slung from the davits, and the heavy line tubs were stowed on deck until the boat had been lowered away. Color schemes varied somewhat, but boats were typically painted white outside with black sheer strakes. Interiors were painted gray, blue, or buff. The oars were of unequal length, owing to the fact that the oarsmen



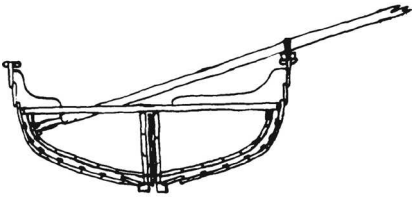


sat at varying distances from their respective tholepins; the steering sweep or oar was longest of all, some twenty-two feet in length. It was used while rowing or being towed by a whale; under sail, the boatsteerer used a removable rudder.

In "going on the whale," as the approach was called, the boat was rowed or sailed to within a hundred yards or so of the quarry; the oars were then peaked—their handles thrust into peaking cleats fastened to the side of the boat opposite the tholepins; then the crew used paddles to close the distance to the whale, in order to avoid gallying or frightening him with the rumble of the oars against the tholepins.

In "getting fast," the harpooneer used a one- or two-flued iron (the better-known toggle iron was not yet in wide use in Melville's day), which he attempted to embed in the tough knot of muscles at the sperm whale's hump. The struck whale would at once run, breach, or sound, towing the boat along at a violent clip on a "Nantucket sleighride." Meanwhile, the boatsteerer, usually one of the ship's officers, and the harpooneer would change places—not a simple maneuver under the circumstances. All hands would keep as low in the boats as possible to prevent its capsizing;

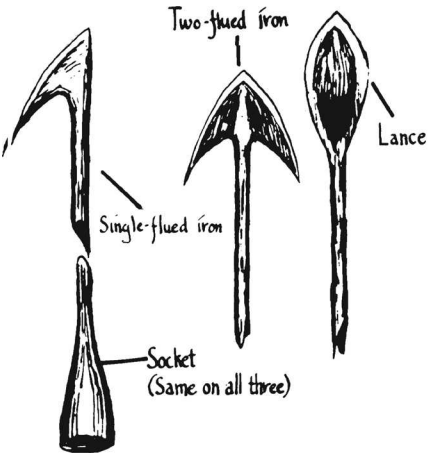
the peaked oars helped in this as well. Meanwhile, the whaleline was sizzling the length of the boat and out through the bow chocks. For a description of how the whaleline was stowed and rigged refer to Chapter 60 and the sketch (p. 442). Note that while Melville mentions that American boats carry only one line tub, and English boats two, our sketch shows two. This development took place during Melville's time, and was owing partly to the introduction of the centerboard and partly to greater ease in handling.



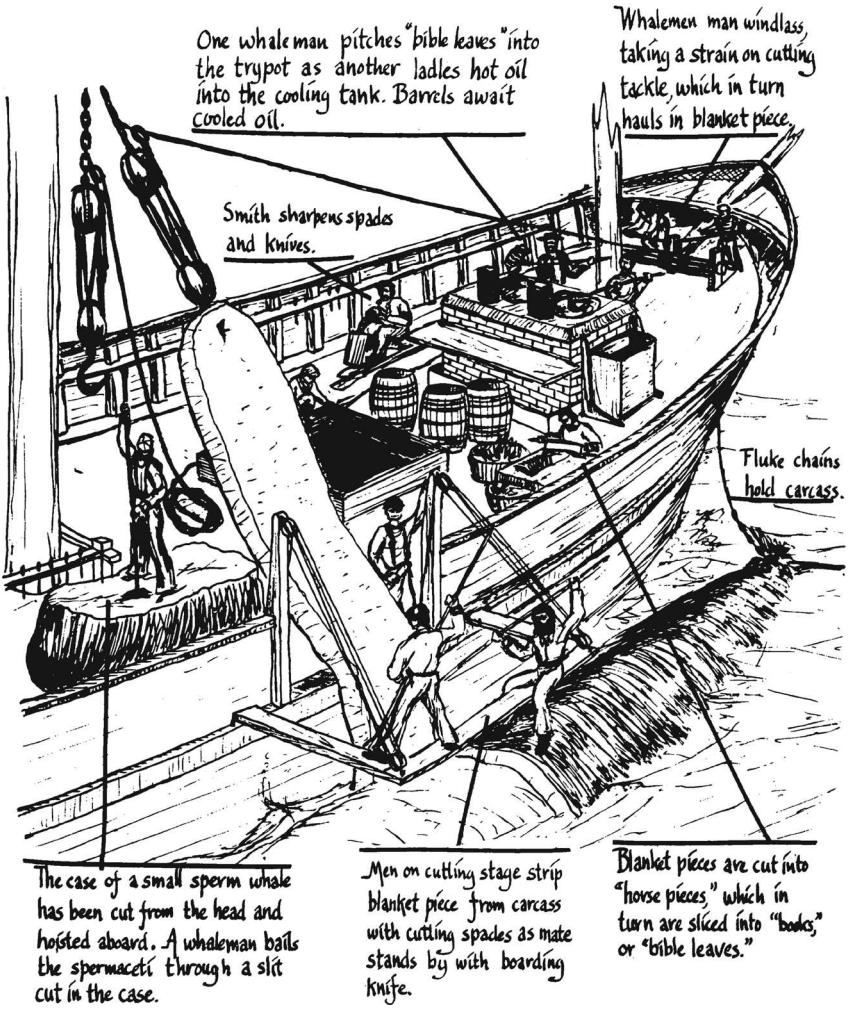
Cross section of whaleboat amidships, showing oar in peaked position

As the whale began to tire, the crew would laboriously haul in on the line until abeam of the animal. The mate would now lance the exhausted beast, repeatedly thrusting the sharp, long-shafted lance into the lungs and churning it about. Here again, we must turn to Melville (Chapters 60 through 63) for the best possible description of the chase and kill. When at last the whale had gone through his flurry and turned fin-out, he was marked by a waif and set adrift, or towed to the ship for cutting-in.

The whale's carcass was now hauled alongside the starboard side of the whaler and made fast with chains around the flukes. The cutting-stage was lowered away, and the jaw cut loose and hoisted aboard for the extraction of the ivory in the case of a sperm whale, or the baleen in the case of a right or bowhead whale. The junk and case of the sperm whale were also cut loose and raised on deck at this point. Melville's description of the cutting-in (Chapter 67) is, once again, far better than any we can give here.

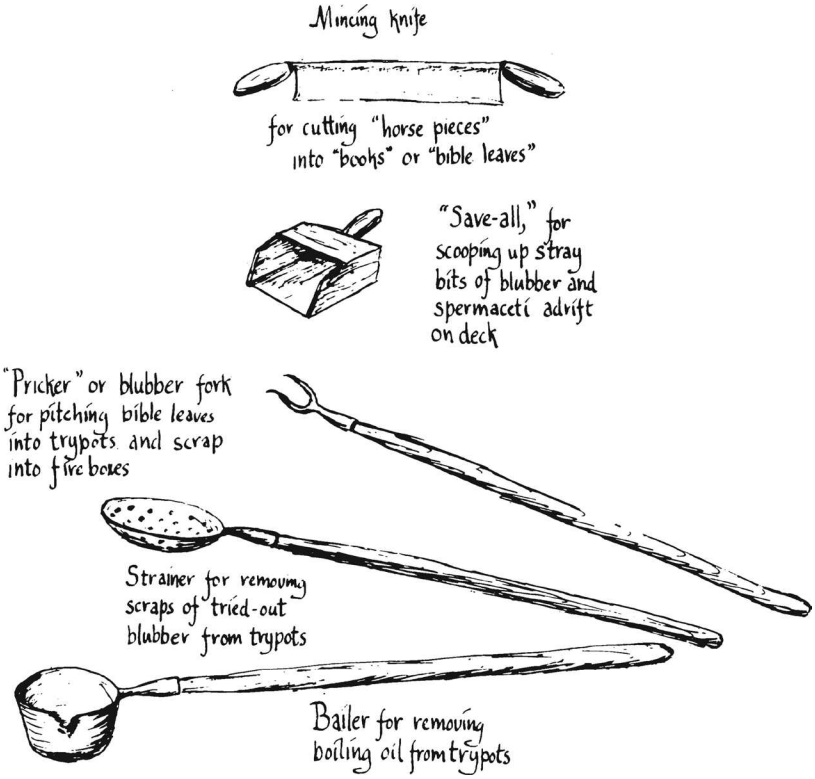


The trying-out was a hot, messy, malodorous process that could stretch into days if a whaler made a number of kills from a single "pod," or group of whales. The tryworks sat just abaft the foremast in a low



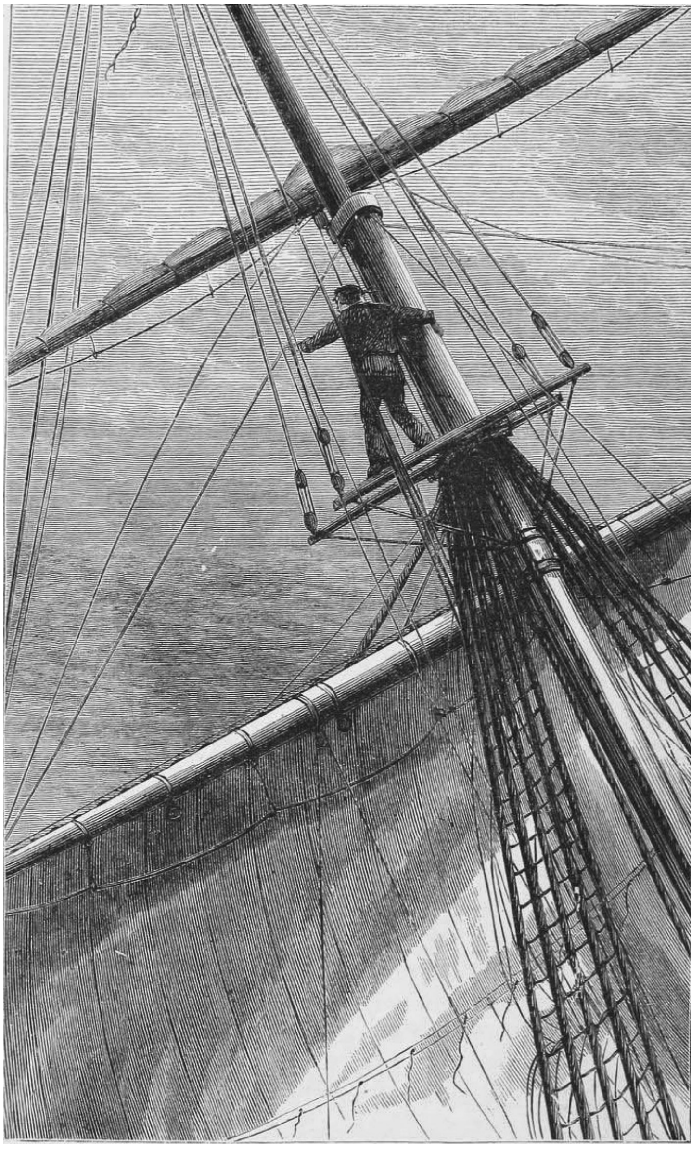
square enclosure called the "goosepen." This wooden-sided trough was floored with bricks checkerboard fashion to allow water to be poured in and to flow freely beneath the firebox, in order to prevent the wooden deck beneath from igniting. On this base was built a square structure of bricks and mortar, into which were set the trypots, twin round cauldrns of about 250 gallons capacity each. The whole business was covered either by a removable cover such as Melville describes in Chapter 66, or more often by a structure similar to the gallows further aft.

When the tryworks were first lit off, firewood was used in the fireboxes. Thereafter, however, the scrap from the tried-out blubber was fished from the bubbling oil and pitched into the firebox to sustain the fires. The hot oil was ladled from the trypots with large long-handled dippers and poured into cooling tanks before being stored in barrels below. The greasy smoke from the tryworks blackened sails, rigging, topsides, and whalemen with a sticky black soot that was the hallmark of a successful whaler.



Melville's description of bailing the case (Chapter 78) gives an excellent idea of the hazards to be endured once the whale was killed and secure alongside. Whaling was always a business of long handles, sharp edges, and sudden deaths for the clumsy or unwary. The rolling of the ship, the slippery footing in blood and blubber, the frenzied tearing of sharks at the whale's carcass inches below the cutting stage, the perilous swoop of tons of blubber across the foredeck as the blanket-piece was severed—all combined to make the whale fishery amongst the most arduous and dangerous of livings.

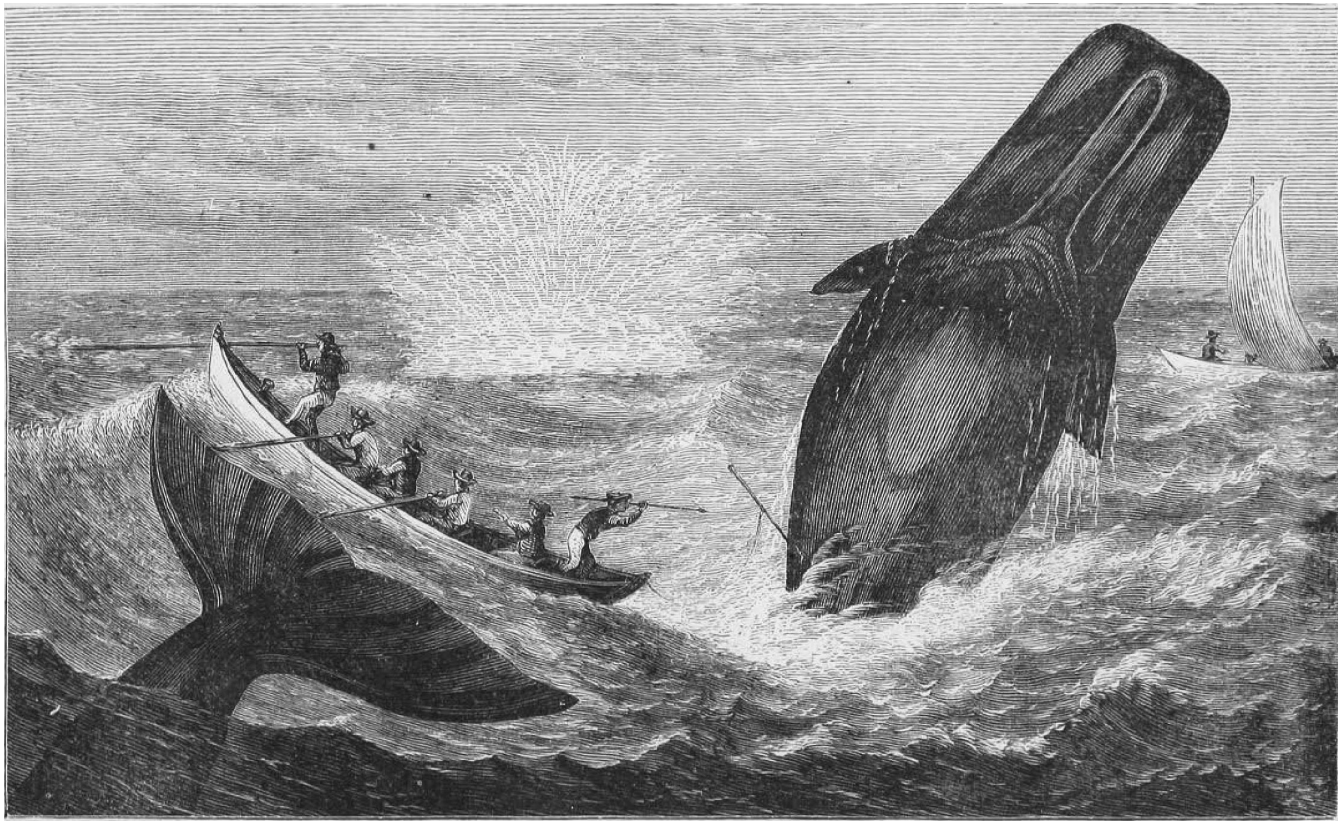
Contemporary Engravings†



"THERE SHE BLOWS!"

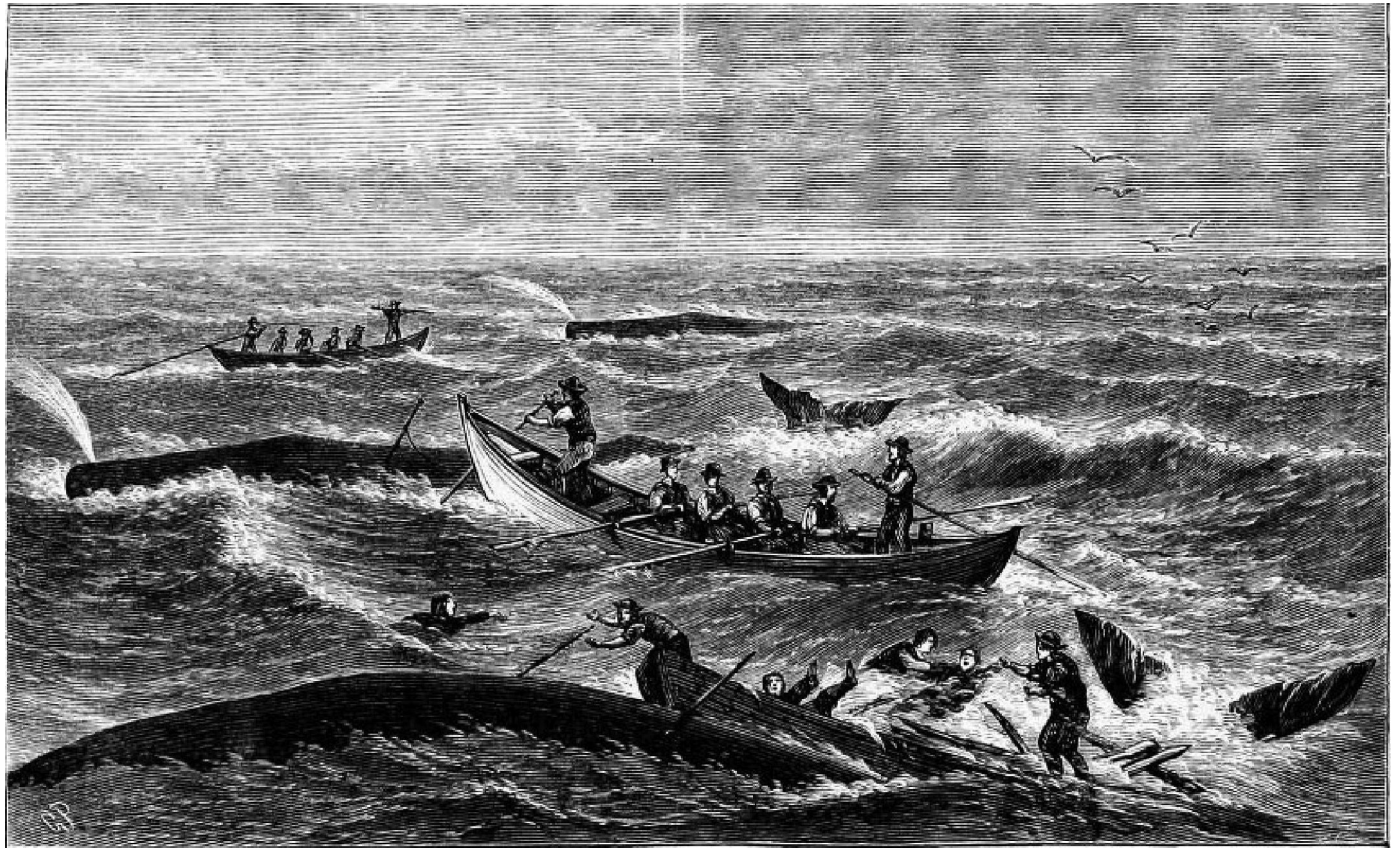
A fairly accurate rendition of the spreaders at the head of one of the topmasts of a squarerigger. It should be noted, however, that the lookouts on a whaler routinely stood their watches in hoops at the head of the topgallant mast—a full mast higher than shown here—where they could command a more far-reaching view.

† Captions written by John B. Putnam for the first edition of this volume. All but one of these illustrations are from William M. Davis, *Nimrod of the Sea; or, The American Whaleman* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1874). "Boat Destroyed by a Whale" appears in W. H. G. Kingston, *Shipwrecks and Disasters at Sea* (London and New York: George Routledge & Sons, 1875).



STRUCK ON A BREACH.

This view gives an excellent idea of the shape and location of the sperm whale's lower jaw. A whale "breaches" when he leaps clear of the water. Normally, the boat-steerer (at left, in stern of boat) would be facing forward, toward the whale. Note the whaleboat at right, under sail.

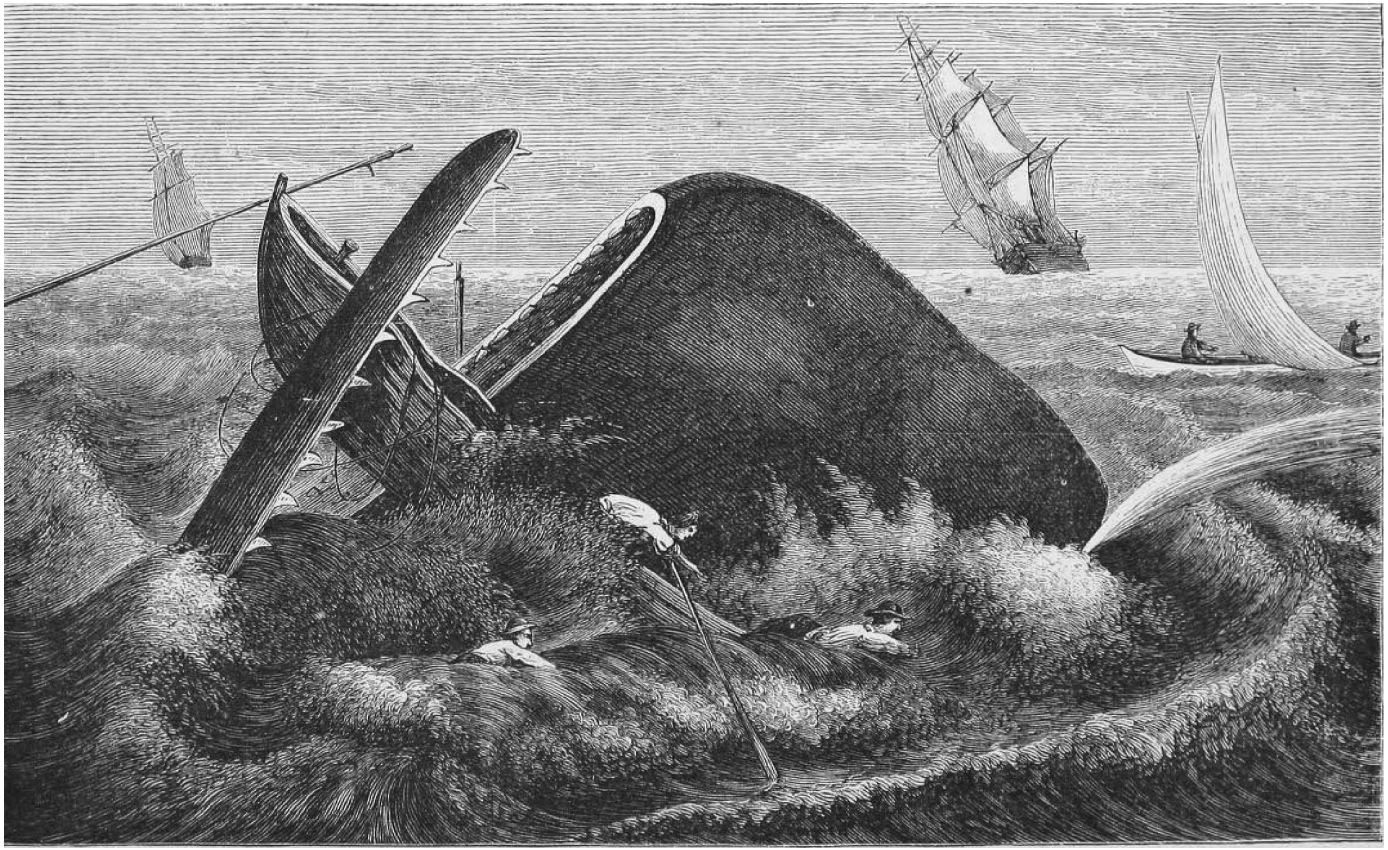


LANCING.

In this picture, the boats' crews have hauled in on the whaleline until abreast of the exhausted prey, and the boatheaders are using the long-handled, barbless lances to complete the kill. See Chapter 61: "Stubb Kills a Whale."

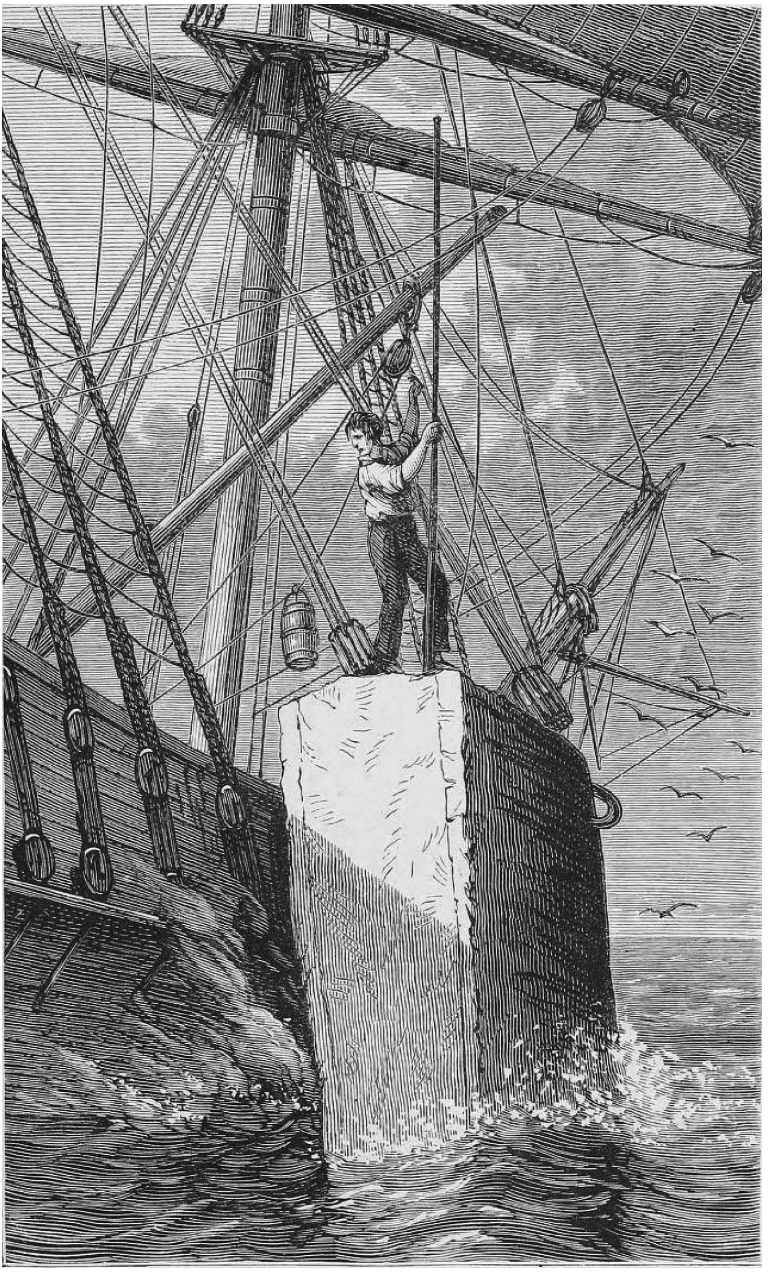
BOAT DESTROYED BY A WHALE.

The flukes, spanning a dozen feet or more, could reduce a whaleboat to splinters with a single blow; the sort of mishap shown here was an all-too-frequent occurrence in the whale fishery. The boats shown here, incidentally, are atypical, in being manned by ten rather than six men, and in being square-sterned rather than double-ended.

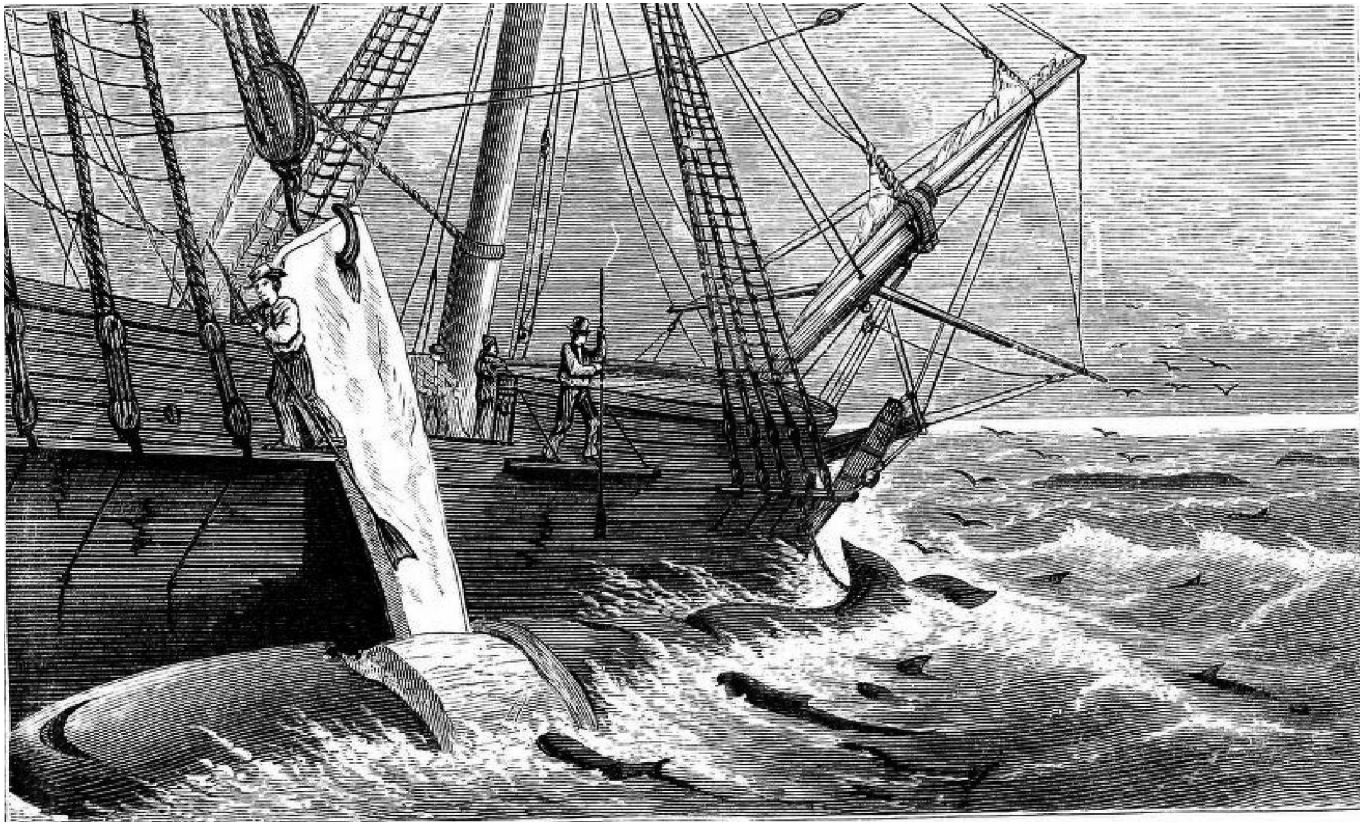


IN THE WHALE'S JAW.

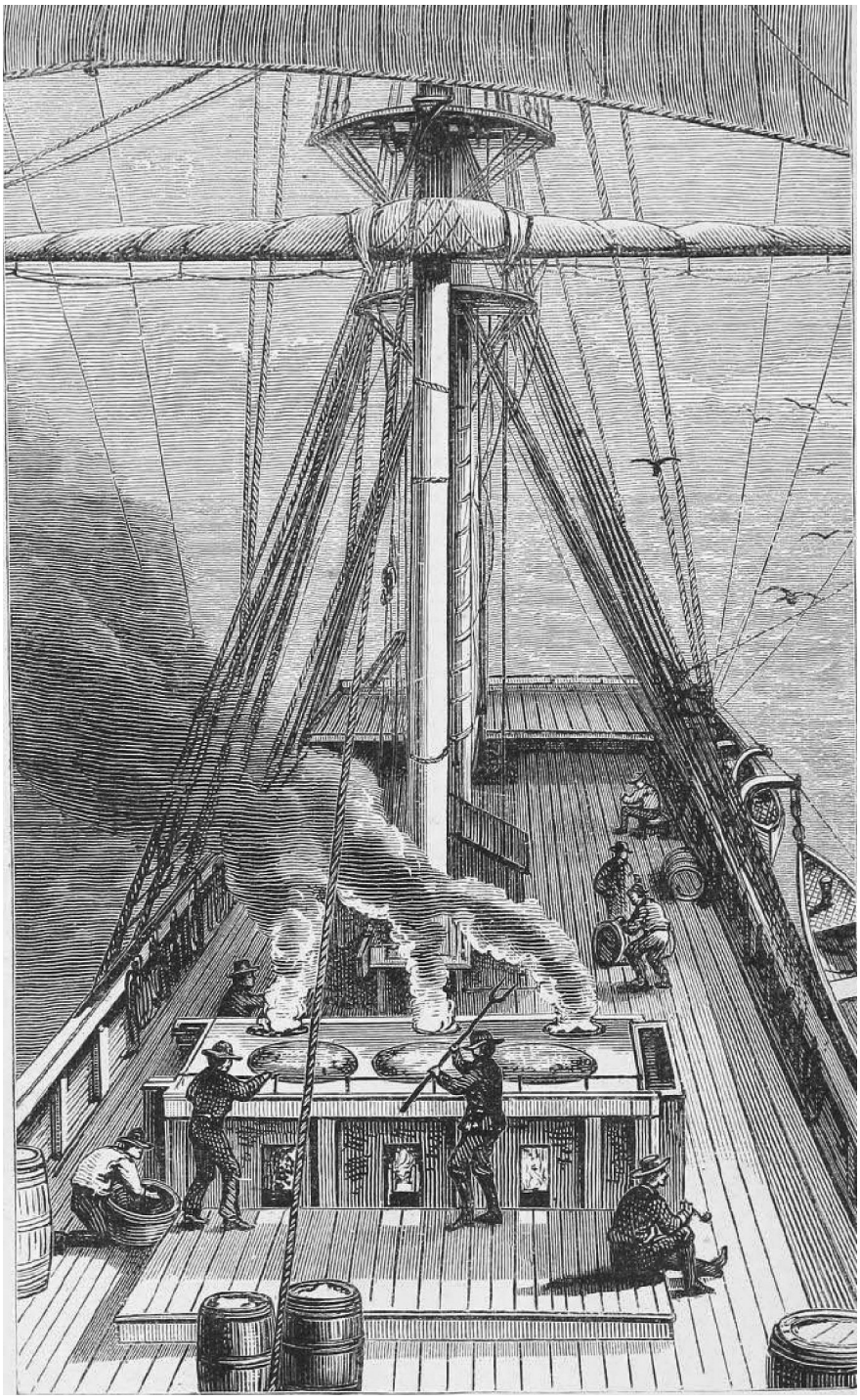
A peculiarity of the sperm whale is its habit of rolling over on its side or back to snap at a tormentor with its strong lower jaw. There are no teeth in the upper jaw, but rather sockets for the teeth of the lower jaw.



BAILING THE "CASE."
A shark's-eye view of the case, or upper portion of the head, of a sperm whale, held up on the whaleship's starboard by the cutting tackle. To the left of the whaleman in the picture is the case-bucket, which was used to remove the spermaceti through a small hole cut atop the case. The bucket was tapered toward both ends, barrel fashion, to prevent its becoming jammed inside the case.



"CUTTING-IN."
One of the cutting falls with its blubber hook taking in the blanket piece. Normally, the two planks shown here were connected by another at their outboard ends to form the cutting stage. Note the fluke chain leading from the bow of the ship; it was passed around the root of the flukes to allow the carcass to revolve as the blanket piece was stripped.



TRYING OUT.

A view of the tryworks from the foremast. This picture shows three trypots, but the use of only two was virtually universal in the American fishery. The pitchfork-like implement held by the whaleman is a "pricker" or blubberfork, used to put the blubber into the pots, and to fish out the tried-out scraps to feed the fires.

Before *Moby-Dick*: International Controversy over Melville

Herman Melville was the second son of a once-wealthy father who died early and left his widow and eight children impoverished at the start of the second term of Andrew Jackson; they were plunged into still more hopeless poverty in the Panic of 1837, at the start of the Van Buren administration. Put to work in a bank in Albany at twelve, then put to work in his older brother Gansevoort's cap and fur store, Melville attended school only a few months during the next years. Raised as he was, he found no niche for himself when he tried to get work as a surveyor maintaining the Erie Canal or when he taught for a pittance in several rural or village schools or when he turned twenty in Liverpool as a sailor on a merchant ship. Yet in retrospect, the rootless, restless, deprived young man had the extraordinary luck to be at the right place at historic times, or near enough to the right time so as to make a good story. Going west to the Mississippi frontier of Illinois in 1840 in the futile hope of making a living there, he witnessed in Detroit the media-whipped hysteria of the Log Cabin Campaign by which the Whigs would win the presidency for a decrepit veteran (though hardly a great hero) of the War of 1812, William Henry Harrison. (Politics had always used symbols, of course, and George Washington had literally been iconic, pictured on everything from tablecloths to statues, but he had created a country; the campaign of 1840 was a triumph of show over substance, as when Whigs for Harrison and Tyler rolled an ornately decorated ball, ten feet in diameter, through one city then conveyed it to another city and rolled it through the streets there.) Later, on the Upper Great Lakes and the Mississippi, Melville saw Native Americans of several tribes living (he could only assume) much as they had lived before the whites came. Chicago was a raw little town on Lake Michigan, only a few years old. However briefly, Melville saw the Mississippi before white settlers had displaced the buffalo from the Great Plains, when Daniel Boone had been dead only twenty years and Davy Crockett only four.

Melville sailed from Fairhaven, Massachusetts, on a whaler in the first week of 1841, expecting (as young people do) matters to proceed normally at home—his Uncle Peter Gansevoort's friend Martin Van Buren to leave office in March and Harrison to be president when he returned, with John Tyler as vice president. His ship arrived at the Pacific island of Nukuheva in 1842 when the Marquesan Islands "had just been taken possession of by Rear Admiral Du Petit Thouars, in the name of the invincible French nation" (*Typee*, Ch. 2). Melville deserted there and became the "Modern Crusoe," as reviewers of *Typee* said in London in 1846, a civilized American

who had lived with South Sea natives (cannibals, he hinted) and had returned to write about the feat. Later in 1842, on his second whaler, he arrived at Tahiti just in time to witness a still more cynical triumph of French colonialism, Du Petit Thouars's thuggish extension of "the protection of His Majesty Louis Phillippe" to the Society Islands. Melville wrote in the Appendix to *Typee* that he had "arrived at Tahiti the very day that the iniquitous designs of the French were consummated by inducing the subordinate chiefs, during the absence of their queen, to ratify an artfully drawn treaty, by which she was virtually deposed. Both menaces and caresses were employed on this occasion, and the 32-pounders which peeped out of the portholes of the frigate were the principal arguments adduced to quiet the scruples of the more conscientious islanders."

In 1843 Melville arrived in Hawaii (still often called the Sandwich Islands) after it had been seized by the British under the cover of a "provisional cession" by King Kamehameha III. He had seen abuses by missionaries in Tahiti, but in Hawaii he saw American Protestant missionaries all but enslaving the native Hawaiians they had come to Christianize. He was on hand in Honolulu on July 28, 1843, when, after angry protests from the American president (Tyler, as Melville had learned sometime in 1841 or 1842), the Union Jack was hauled down and the flag of the Sandwich Islands hoisted, all accompanied by ceremonial cannoning from British warships.

Few Americans of his time knew better what colonialism and imperialism looked like up close, and no other American writer of his time had Melville's intimate experience of life among "natives" of another race in their own world (in the interior of a Pacific Island), not yet deeply contaminated by contact with the occasional runaway sailor over the last decades and not yet reached by missionaries. No other American writer of his time had Melville's intimate experience with living in close quarters (forecastles) for prolonged periods with as many men of different races, nationalities, ages, and levels of learning).

Away from the U.S. "civilization," brooding under the southern constellations that he identified as making him receptive to new ideas, Melville developed a keen sense of cultural relativity that set him at odds with the pious conventionalities of his society. For him the Polynesians would never be savages waiting to be evangelized whatever the cost to their culture, their health, and their lives. The dominant American racial attitude toward all "uncivilized" (and unchristianized) races was that of the proper Bostonian Francis Parkman, who infused *The California and Oregon Trail* (1849) with disdain for the American Indians he encountered on the Great Plains (and who, soon after the book was published, married another proper Bostonian, a second cousin of Melville's). Even as late as the 1860s and 1870s prominent ministers of Melville's acquaintance could look forward coolly to the necessary extirpation of the "Red Race" as white settlement of the West went inevitably forward. (In 1876 Melville's eighteen-thousand-line Centennial poem, *Clarel*, was all but ignored as newspapers filled their columns with reports that the Sioux under Sitting Bull and Crazy Horse had annihilated U.S. troops under George Custer at Little Big Horn, an Indian victory that signaled ultimate white triumph.)

When his U.S. Navy frigate, the *United States*, reached Boston in October 1844, Melville and others were kept aboard for days during which

the fate of a slave on the ship was decided by the chief justice of the supreme court of Massachusetts, Lemuel Shaw—his father's old friend, the fiancé of his aunt Nancy Melvill (without the *e*) who died before they could marry, and the man who in 1847 became his father-in-law. Shaw declared the man free because his owner, the purser, had deliberately taken him aboard the ship that had now anchored in a free state. Melville was in New York for the election of 1844, in time to hear his brother Gansevoort instruct a mass meeting of Democrats across the Hudson in Newark on the "history, geographical position, and undeveloped resources of Texas" and "the constitutionality and expediency of re-annexation," then enter "into a very ingenious and lucid argument for the purpose of demonstrating that the annexation of Texas would necessarily lead to the gradual extinction of slavery in the slave-holding States, and their consequent vastly increased prosperity." Gansevoort Melville had gained national fame as the man chosen to go to Tennessee that summer and assure westerners of the loyalty of the easterners to the Democratic nominee, James K. Polk, who had promised to annex Texas.

Through the mid 1840s many Americans, like Polk, were committed not only to annex Texas but also to fight off any British attempt to seize more than what Americans decided was an acceptably minimal share of Oregon. While Melville was still stuck on the *United States* in the Boston Navy Yard in October 1844, Gansevoort had convinced an audience of Schenectady, New York, Democrats "that England was, as she ever has been, painfully alive to, and jealous of, the stately steppings of our young and growing Republic, and that she is insidiously attempting to check our territorial extension, and to increase her colonial possessions in America." As secretary of the American legation in London in late 1845 and early 1846 (until his sudden death), Gansevoort impetuously warned against British imperialism on the Pacific coast of North America. The American publisher George P. Putnam recalled decades later that Gansevoort had been an incendiary: "Replying to a formal toast, 'The President of the United States,' the Secretary electrified the diplomatic circle by a Tammany speech,[1] winding up somewhat thus: 'I was one who helped to place Mr. Polk where he now is, and I know that he will not *dare* to recede from 54–40!'"—the southernmost latitude firebrands were prepared to concede to England.

War against the mother country was a real possibility as Melville began his career with a book published first in London through the good offices of Gansevoort (and welcomed by the publisher in part because of its pro-British, anti-French sentiments). Putnam, who happened to be in London early in 1846, accepted *Typee* for Wiley & Putnam of New York on the advice of his most prized author, the most famous American writer of the last half century and now the outgoing minister to Spain, Washington Irving, who happened to arrive in London just then and who naturally visited his old haunt, the legation, where he had once held Gansevoort's job. In New York John Wiley, a devout Congregationalist (a sect closely allied with the Presbyterians, both missionary minded), rushed the book into print without reading it.

Melville's first two books, *Typee* and *Omoo*, became sensationally controversial, at first because *Typee* was thought to be a hoax, then because

1. A fiery, reckless, raucous speech, such as one might hear in the New York City Democatic headquarters, Tammany Hall (Parker, *Herman Melville: A Biography*, 1.389–90).

Melville had dared to criticize the American Protestant missionaries who functioned as informal agents of potential American colonialism, then because of the sexual stance Melville had taken in those books, where he described the open sexuality of sailors with South Sea island women but ambiguously and teasingly portrayed himself as possibly a shocked onlooker, possibly an active participant. Wiley quickly forced Melville to expurgate *Typee*, so that from mid-1846 only the so-called revised edition was sold in the United States, while Murray's unexpurgated edition went all over the British Empire in sets of his "Home and Colonial Library." Melville moved to Harper & Brothers with *Omoo*, the Methodists willing for a time to put profit over the cause of evangelicalism, for that book also attacked the behavior of missionaries.

Reviewers of *Omoo* consolidated the public view of Melville as a man with a sexual history (a happy dog, said the *Times* of London), so that he was the first and for some years the only American literary sex symbol—envied or condemned by readers. Some readers (see the reviews by Horace Greeley and G. W. Peck in this volume), to their extreme discomfiture, found themselves simultaneously envying and condemning. Melville attracted the equivalent of a rock star's groupies. In 1847 he and Elizabeth Shaw could not marry in church for fear his fans would storm it; in 1849 a woman holding *Omoo* as she read on shipboard looked up at him appraisingly, making comparisons; just after the publication of *Moby-Dick* a newspaper correspondent from Lenox, Massachusetts, described him as "one whose name often lingers now in terms of adulation upon many rosy lips." Because *Typee* and *Omoo* were his most popular books throughout his lifetime, many readers continued to see him as a literary sex symbol, even after the pyschological novel *Pierre* (1852), widely declared to be insane, broke that image for reviewers. (To judge from the reviews and biographical record, Melville was a heterosexual sex symbol; two decades after his career began, he knew from at least one correspondent, Charles W. Stoddard, that *Typee* and *Omoo* could be perceived as a guide to homosexual adventures in the South Seas.) Melville began *Moby-Dick* in a New York City house with his mother, four sisters, wife, and son and his brother and *his* wife and daughter (and four live-in servants); then continued it in an isolated farmhouse outside Pittsfield, Massachusetts, with wife (for the last half year of the composition, in her second pregnancy), son, mother, and three or for a while all four sisters, and at least one servant. All the time he was composing *Moby-Dick* in such intensely domestic situations, he knew that he was, like Lord Byron but like no American before him, a writer whose appeal was partly based on sexual notoriety that he had teasingly created and exploited. He knew, that is, that just as any religious flippancy would be seized on, any sexual teasing he wrote into *Moby-Dick* would arouse intense responses merely because of the public perception of him as a sexual celebrity (whatever the reality of his sexual experiences in the South Seas or elsewhere).

When news of the European revolutions of 1848 reached New York City, Melville promptly altered the direction of his work in progress, *Mardi* (1849), so as to write the events into his manuscript, and two years later he got his own look at postwar Paris. One of the Harper brothers—the publishers of *Moby-Dick*—won the mayorship of New York City in 1849 as a Nativist, the xenophobic party (precursor of the Know-Nothings) that

opposed unlimited immigration, especially of the Irish. Protestants took doctrinal differences seriously (why else be a Congregationalist, drawing authority from the members of the local church, and not a Methodist, granting authority to some remaining parts of Anglican hierarchy, such as bishops, unless to save your soul?) and strove for clarity and triumph of belief, not for a tolerant ecumenicalism. In this climate, it was easy to enflame the citizenry with identity politics, and in the ensuing violence of the 1830s and early 1840s a Catholic convent and a school were burned in the City of Brotherly Love, Philadelphia. Melville had seen immigrants up close when he returned from Liverpool in 1839 on a ship overfilled with steerage passengers, and in Chapter 58 of *Redburn* (1849) he wrote passionately: "Let us waive that agitated national topic, as to whether such multitudes of foreign poor should be landed on our American shores; let us waive it, with the one only thought, that if they can get here, they have God's right to come; though they bring all Ireland and her miseries with them. For the whole world is the patrimony of the whole world; there is no telling who does not own a stone in the Great Wall of China."

When he began *Moby-Dick*, Melville was a young man (only thirty) of remarkable experiences and deep if hit-or-miss learning, who had been an eyewitness to history. His wide-ranging historical and political allusions in *Moby-Dick* and his allusions to recent European and Latin American history are grounded both in his reading and his personal experiences in Post-Revolutionary and Jacksonian America, then in the Pacific and the coast of South America in the early 1840s, and the United States and Europe in the later 1840s. When Melville began *Moby-Dick* what he saw in Europe, in the Pacific, in the Americas, in Asia and Africa, was that much of the world was up for grabs, ripe for the taking. The Hawaiian Islands had been seized by the British (partly to prevent their being seized by the French) and might again be seized, by the British, the French, or the czar of Russia, who still owned Alaska and needed warmer ports; and who was to stop the United States from seizing Canada and Cuba? England might be the nation to reap the profits of forcibly opening up Japan to European trade; England might further challenge the Bostonians and New Yorkers as masters of the China trade. Mexico had been up for grabs in the mid-1840s, and at the end of "the Mexican War," two years before Melville started writing *Moby-Dick*, it had surrendered a gigantic stretch of southwestern territory to the United States, which then paid good Yankee dollars for another hunk: when would the conquest or purchases stop?

In 1850 much of the vastly expanded United States was up for grabs—even the plains territories of Kansas and possibly Nebraska—to the extension of slavery. The very existence of the young United States was more at risk than ever before during the year 1850, the first year Melville worked on *Moby-Dick*; he was writing obsessively in December when his Pittsfield neighbors rallied to support the Compromise of 1850, which committed the North to return fugitive slaves to their owners in the South so as to preserve the Union. American slaves in Virginia had revolted in Melville's adolescence: might slaves again rise against their masters out of desperation at another remedy, now that the South seemed to be supported by all the North except what responsible people, Democrats or Whigs alike, thought of as a lunatic fringe of abolitionists? Even the sanctity of marriage was endangered, many thought, by the

presence of followers of the slain Joseph Smith (that is, Mormons) anywhere on the vast continent. Characteristically, Melville identified with the outcasts; in a letter to his friend Evert A. Duyckinck written just as he began *Moby-Dick*, he said his unpopular *Mardi* had been "driven forth like a wild, mystic Mormon into shelterless exile." The whole of the United States was up for grabs from a foreign religious state, the Vatican, if you believed the rabid preachers and journalists who had been proclaiming for years in papers like the *American Protestant Vindicator* that Jesuits were prowling the United States in disguise (peddlers, blacksmiths, opticians, one never knew), ready for the signal to throw off their disguises and unite with all the Irish immigrants to seize the country for the pope. Among the American writers, Washington Irving was old, and the younger new poets and fiction writers seemed too tame: American literary greatness was also up for grabs, as Melville made clear in an essay he wrote while halfway through *Moby-Dick*, "Hawthorne and his Mosses." The time was right. It was no coincidence that Walt Whitman's magnificent *Leaves of Grass* followed *Moby-Dick* by less than four years.

GANSEVOORT MELVILLE

[A Compliment to Tennesseans—and a Tribute to Andrew Jackson]†

Melville's older brother Gansevoort (1815–1846) returned to New York City just before the election of 1844 after a spectacularly successful and controversial stump speaking tour for James K. Polk in the then West (see Parker 1996). Gansevoort took a ferry across the Hudson to Newark on November 2 and in Washington Hall addressed a large and enthusiastic crowd, in which were his younger brothers Herman (just returned from the Pacific) and Allan (like Gansevoort, a New York City lawyer). After speaking about the "history, geographical position, and undeveloped resources of Texas and defending at length the constitutionality and expediency of re-annexation" (a politic argument among Democrats being that Texas had already been annexed, once), Gansevoort broached a divisive subject, slavery, with "a very ingenious and lucid argument . . . that the annexation of Texas would necessarily lead to the gradual extinction of slavery in the slave-holding States, and their consequent vastly increased prosperity." In its transcription the Southern-sympathizing *Herald* on November 5 misprinted "extinction" as just the opposite "extension," but Gansevoort was arguing that slavery in Texas would prove so unprofitable it would die out.

After complimenting the people of Tennessee, Gansevoort paid tribute to the aged and frail Andrew Jackson.

Why, here, if a gentleman offers his hand to a fashionable lady she receives it in a sort of minimy pinimy, don't touch me sort of an air, that may perhaps affect him unpleasantly; but these Tennessee girls take right hold as if they meant it, and in a way that is really delightful to a plain, backward, bashful man like myself. (Great laughter and cheers) And then the Tennesseans of the man sex have peculiaristics of manner which are decidedly interesting and characteristic. One of these peculiarities is,

† Speech reprinted in *The New York Herald* (November 5, 1844).

that they make a man talk such an unconscionable time. If a man gets up to speak, and they don't happen to like him, they soon shout out—"Hello, stranger, you've mistaken your vocation—slope!" (Roars of laughter.) And if he won't slope, they make him. (Renewed laughter) Tennessee is, indeed, the land of social democracy. I have seen men clad in linsey-woolsey garments, and with unshod feet, setting in Colonel Polk's parlor, and at the table of Andrew Jackson.[1] (Loud cheers) They are ever frank and free in expressing their opinion, be it pleasant to the hearer or the reverse. On one occasion, after I had addressed a large popular assemblage, a sturdy frontier's man, who was about six feet high,[2] without a superfluous ounce of flesh upon his stalwart frame, one of your men who never turn their backs on either friend or foe, and who looked as if he could whip his weight in wild cats, (laughter) strode up to me and grasped my hand with an iron energy that gets up [*sic*] reminded me forcibly of a vice, and suddenly withdrawing his grasp, slapped me on the back with tremendous force, sung out—"Old horse—I love you!" (Roars of laughter, repeated again and again.) . . . When Andrew Jackson dies, he will not drivel his path to the grave like a slobbering dotard, as the whig press falsely call him; but when HE dies—when the great soul within shall have utterly consumed its outer tenement of clay—why, then, a MAN will die! And our children, and children's children, will go up to that corner of the little garden at the Hermitage, where his wife now lies—and by whose side he will sleep in death—and that will forever be to us and our descendants, next to Mount Vernon,[3] the holiest and most sacred spot on American soil. . . . (Great manifestation of feeling amongst the audience).

ANONYMOUS

[An American Sailor on the Missionaries]†

* * * Had this work been put forward as the production of an English common sailor, we should have had some doubts of its authenticity, in the absence of distinct proof. But in the United States it is different. There social opinion does not invest any employment with caste discredit; and it seems customary with young men of respectability to serve as common seamen, either as a probationership to the navy or as a mode of seeing life. Cooper and Dana[1] are examples of this practice. The wide-spread

1. Gansevoort had visited Polk (1795–1849; president 1845–49) and had slept at Jackson's Hermitage, a very great honor.
2. Few men were six feet tall. You can turn several full pages of American passport applications in the National Archives without seeing any man claiming to be that tall.
3. The home of the first president, George Washington, across the Potomac from Washington, D.C., already a national shrine.

† London *Spectator*, 19 (February 28, 1846): 209–10.

1. Melville's predecessors as American sea-writers. James Fenimore Cooper (1789–1851), a foremast hand and a midshipman after being dismissed from Yale, started writing nautical novels with *The Pilot* (1823) and even after his fame as the creator of Leatherstocking wrote *The Red Rover* (1827) and other sea books. Richard Henry Dana Jr., who sailed for California after leaving Harvard because of eye troubles, became a lawyer and gained fame for *Two Years before the Mast* (1840) before becoming a leading opponent of the Fugitive Slave Law. Friendly with Melville in 1847–50, united by their hostility to their mutual publisher, Harper & Brothers (who twisted the *Two Years* copyright out of Dana for a pittance), they went separate ways, perhaps because of Dana's fury at Melville's father-in-law, Judge Lemuel Shaw, for enforcing the Fugitive Slave Law in 1851 and 1854.

system of popular education also bestows upon the American a greater familiarity with popular literature and a readier use of the pen than is usual with classes of the same apparent grade in England. Striking as the style of composition may sometimes seem in a *Residence in the Marquesas*,[2] there is nothing in it beyond the effects of a vivacious mind, acquainted with popular books, and writing with the national fluency; or a reading sailor spinning a yarn; nothing to indicate the student or the scholar. Yet we should like to have had the story of the book; to have known the motives of the publication, and whether it is an American reprint or a conjoint appearance, or whether Mr. Murray has the sole right of publishing. There are certain sea freedoms, too, that might as well have been removed before issuing it for family reading. . . .

The "service" has had the effect of enlarging Mr. Melville's mind and making him less provincial in feeling than many of his countrymen. It has also given him some knowledge of the South Seas generally, which appears in the comparisons he incidentally introduces; and has impressed him with an indifferent opinion of (to say the least) the self-seeking and worldly spirit of the missionaries. Here is an example of them at the Sandwich Islands.[3] * * *

ANONYMOUS

[A Bewitching Work]†

Since the joyous moment when we first read Robinson Crusoe and believed it all, and wondered all the more because we believed, we have not met with

2. That is, Melville's *Typee: A Peep at Polynesian Life During a Four Months' Residence in the Valley of the Marquesas* (1846).
3. Here the *Spectator* quotes what it titles "The Missionary Equipage" from Ch. 26 in *Typee*, where Melville introduces a depiction of missionary outrages in Hawaii with this heightened rhetorical passage:

> Let the savages be civilized, but civilize them with benefits, and not with evils; and let heathenism be destroyed, but not by destroying the heathen. The Anglo-Saxon hive have extirpated Paganism from the greater part of the North American continent; but with it they have likewise extirpated the greater portion of the Red race. Civilization is gradually sweeping from the earth the lingering vestiges of Paganism, and at the same time the shrinking forms of its unhappy worshippers.

He goes on:

> Among the islands of Polynesia, no sooner are the images overturned, the temples demolished, and the idolators converted into *nominal* Christians, than disease, vice, and premature death make their appearance. The depopulated land is then recruited from the rapacious hordes of enlightened individuals who settle themselves within its borders, and clamorously announce the progress of the Truth. Neat villas, trim gardens, shaven lawns, spires, and cupolas arise, while the poor savage soon finds himself an interloper in the country of his fathers, and that too on the very site of the hut where he was born.

Melville's outrage culminates in a depiction of the behavior of missionaries and their families in Hawaii:

> Not until I visited Honolulu was I aware of the fact that the small remnant of the natives had been civilized into draught horses, and evangelized into beasts of burden. But so it is. They have been literally broken into the traces, and are harnessed to the vehicles of their spiritual instructors like so many dumb brutes!

Melville gave one memorable sketch of a heavily built missionary's wife beating the men harnessed to her "go-cart," to make them pull her faster.

† London *John Bull* (March 7, 1846).

so bewitching a work as this narrative of Herman Melville's [*Typee*], which forms the thirtieth and thirty-first parts of Mr. Murray's *Home and Colonial Library*. Like Robinson Crusoe, however, we cannot help suspecting that if there be really such a person as Herman Melville, he has either employed a Daniel Defoe to describe his adventures, or is himself both a Defoe and an Alexander Selkirk.[1]

The work professes to be written by an American common sailor, who, with one of his comrades, escaped from the *Dolly*,[2] a South Sea whaler (in consequence of the cruelty of the captain), when she touched at Nukuheva, the principal of that group of islands in the Pacific known by the name of the Marquesas—so called in honour of the Marquess de Mendoza, Viceroy of Peru, under whose auspices, in the year 1595, the navigator sailed who first visited them.

Nothing is said as to whether this work is a reprint from an American edition, or whether it has been transmitted to this country in manuscript for publication; while the tone of the article which appears in the appendix, warmly vindicating the conduct of Lord George Paulet in the affair of the Sandwich Islands, would almost justify the suspicion that the work is not written by an American at all.[3] When too, we consider the style of composition, so easy, so graceful, and so graphic, we own the difficulty we feel in believing that it is the production of a common sailor. It is "affectionately inscribed" to "Lemuel Shaw, Chief Justice of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts."[4] Be the author, however, whom and what he may, he has produced a narrative of singular interest, not merely as regards his own personal adventures, which are in the highest degree exciting and romantic, but as regards the remarkable people (the Typees) among whom he sojourned for some time, and whose manners and customs he delineates with so much power. More than three years, he informs us, have elapsed since the occurrence of the events he has described, and as the account of them, he says, when "spun as a yarn," not only relieved the weariness of many a night watch at sea, but excited the warmest sympathies of the author's "shipmates," he was "led to think that his story could scarcely fail to interest those who are less familiar than the sailor with a life of adventure." There are a few passages, here and there,

1. Defoe (1660–1731) wrote *Robinson Crusoe* (1719) based partly on an account of the experience of the Scottish seaman Alexander Selkirk (1676–1721), who lived alone on Juan Fernández (off Chile) in 1704–09 after being put ashore. At this time, American readers usually had access only to condensed and expurgated versions of *Robinson Crusoe* (the case also with Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels*, 1726).
2. Melville's fictional name for the *Acushnet*.
3. Melville's extremely partisan "appendix" to *Typee* contrasted the brutal French seizure of Tahiti with the British Lord George Paulet's benignant acceptance of the provisional cession of the Sandwich Islands early in 1843 and his restoration of power to the Hawaiian king a few months later. The villains in Hawaii were Dr. Gerritt Judd and his "junto of ignorant and designing Methodist elders in the councils of a half-civilized king, ruling with absolute sway over a nation just poised between barbarism and civilization." Paulet had taken action partly because the Methodist junta, systematically keeping Catholic priests out of the Hawaiian Islands, had dared to deport two who had arrived in a British ship. Lord Paulet was making a preemptive strike, for the junta had so outraged the French in the Pacific that they might have seized the islands first to make them safe for Catholicism: better the Anglican British than the Catholic French.
4. Lemuel Shaw (1781–1861), Barnstable-born, Harvard-educated lawyer, chief justice of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts (1830–60), whose only daughter, Elizabeth Knapp Shaw, married Herman Melville on August 4, 1847.

obnoxious[5] to the same censure which was bestowed upon Dr. Hawkesworth for his account of Otaheite, in Cook's Voyages.[6]

CAPTAIN E. KNIGHT

[Gansevoort Melville on the Strategic Importance of Orgeon]†

During the month of March last, I had the pleasure of riding many miles, visiting many places, and spending many days and nights, in his [Gansevoort Melville's] company. I shall never forget our visit to Cambridge. Passing under the same archways, along the same walks, through the same doors and halls, which were so familiar once to many great men, we finally arrived at the Library rooms, when Mr. M, walking up to an immense terrestrial globe suspended in the centre of one of the rooms, and placing his hand upon it, said, ["]Look here, gentlemen, and see if any American can carefully examine the map of our globe, and not feel a gratitude and just pride at seeing the geographical position our country holds upon its face. Here lies Asia and the whole East, with its immense wealth. There is the mouth of the Columbia River, almost as near Canton as London is to New York. Now here is a little speck called Europe, upon the Eastern shores of the Atlantic, and a smaller speck on its Western shore called New England, including New York city, which have ever held the trade of this immense region, at the expense of passing Cape Horn, or the Cape of Good Hope, the South Atlantic, Indian Ocean,["] &c. &c. "Look here," said he, "and tell me if any American can give up, or barter away the valley of the Columbia, and not, Esau like, sell his birth-right?"[1]

[NATHANIEL HAWTHORNE]

[Melville's "Freedom of View" (Not "Laxity of Principle")]‡

The present numbers of this excellent and popular series [Wiley & Putnam's *Library of American Books*] contain a very remarkable work,

5. Liable.
6. John Hawkesworth (1715–1773) edited the journals of the British explorer Captain James Cook (1728–1779, killed by residents of Hawaii) and Philip Carteret's (British admiral and explorer of the Pacific, d. 1796) *Account of the Voyages . . . in the Southern Hemisphere* (1773), in which he portrayed the natives of Tahiti (or Otaheite) as innocently sensual.

† On March 14, 1846, four Americans—Gansevoort Melville, Captain E. Knight (master of the *Switzerland*), Mr. McCready of Philadelphia, and William Pickney Starke of South Carolina—met as planned at the Eastern Counties Railway station at London and took second-class seats to Cambridge. Gansevoort Melville died in London on May 12, 1846, at the age of thirty. This obituary notice by Captain Knight is from the New York *Journal of Commerce* as reprinted in the Albany *Argus* on June 4, 1846.

1. As Esau does in Genesis 25.27–34.

‡ Salem, Massachusetts, *Advertiser* (March 25, 1846). Hawthorne's *Journal of an African Cruiser* (1845) preceded Melville's *Typee* in Wiley & Putnam's *Library of American Books*, and *Mosses from an Old Manse* soon followed it, so they—along with other writers, including Edgar Allan Poe, Caroline Kirkland, and Margaret Fuller—were often listed together in various volumes of the prestigious series and in advertisements for it.

entitled *Typee, or a Peep at Polynesian Life*. It records the adventures of a young American who ran away from a whale ship at the Marquesas, and spent some months as the guest, or captive, of a native tribe, of which scarcely anything had been hitherto known to the civilized world.—The book is lightly but vigorously written; and we are acquainted with no work that gives a freer and more effective picture of barbarian life, in that unadulterated state of which there are now so few specimens remaining. The gentleness of disposition that seems akin to the delicious climate, is shown in contrast with traits of savage fierceness;—on one page, we read of manners and modes of life that indicate a whole system of innocence and peace; and on the next, we catch a glimpse of a smoked human head, and the half-picked skeleton of what had been (in a culinary sense) a *well-dressed* man. The author's descriptions of the native girls are voluptuously colored, yet not more so than the exigencies of the subject appear to require. He has that freedom of view—it would be too harsh to call it laxity of principle—which renders him tolerant of codes of morals that may be little in accordance with our own; a spirit proper enough to a young and adventurous sailor, and which makes his book the more wholesome to our staid landsmen.[1] The narrative is skillfully managed, and in a literary point of view, the execution of the work is worthy of the novelty and interest of its subject.

ANONYMOUS

[A Unique Eyewitness]†

One of the most delightful narratives of adventure ever published. This book [*Typee*] divulges the cant, humbug, and glaring inaccuracy of the nonsense respecting Polynesia which has at intervals been palmed upon the English public as the experience of trustworthy travellers. Swallowing, with all the voracity of marvel-lovers, every absurd "yarn" spun by a

Sophia Hawthorne was particularly taken with the voluptuous depiction of the Marquesan maiden Fayaway in *Typee*, to the point of imagining her when she first looked on Melville's face in 1850; that is, she saw Melville, as many did, in terms of his presumed exotic and erotic experiences without considering the possibility that Fayaway (during his lifetime Melville's most famous character) might have been to some extent a fictional portrait. In 1850 Hawthorne read *Typee* again (probably in the expurgated "revised edition") as well as *Omoo, Mardi, Redburn,* and *White-Jacket*, when Evert A. Duyckinck sent them to him in Lenox, Massachusetts, in a package delivered by Melville himself, who was unwitting of its contents.

1. The English edition and the first American printing contained a description of the way the native women swam out naked (holding a girdle of tappa, a cloth from the South Pacific made from pounding bark from the paper mulberry tree, above the water) to the whale ship and boarded it, where the sailors greeted them. Such descriptions had been printed before, so the fact of sexual orgies was no news to seasoned readers. What was new was Melville's teasing tone, in lines in Ch. 2 soon to be expurgated from the American "revised edition": "What a sight for us bachelor sailors! how avoid so dire a temptation? For who could think of tumbling these artless creatures overboard, when they had swam miles to welcome us?" More upsetting to some readers was Melville's having it both ways, apparently participating in the actions yet seeming to distance himself from the behavior of every other man in the crew:

> Our ship was now wholly given up to every species of riot and debauchery. Not the feeblest barrier was interposed between the unholy passions of the crew and their unlimited gratification. The grossest licentiousness and the most shameful inebriety prevailed, with occasional and but short-lived interruptions, through the whole period of her stay. Alas for the poor savages when exposed to the influence of these polluting examples!

† London S*un* (March 30, 1846).

jocular tar over his grog in the forecastle, and noting them down as likely to sell excellently among the credulous readers at home, the majority of "writers of travel" accumulate their information from hearsay, and retail such fallacies with whatever additions may tend to heighten their attractiveness. With very few exceptions indeed, these assertions hold good. Among the mass of "Voyages and Travels" already printed an enormous library of fiction might be collected, and that fiction the most extravagant and improbable. The writer of this work, an American sailor, stands however totally apart from those scribblers; he is the eyewitness of every circumstance he relates; and, from having lived (during a captivity of four months) among the Typea inhabitants of Nukuheva Island, he had assuredly sufficient opportunities of becoming acquainted with the customs, disposition, social relations, and mode of life as visible among the so-called "savages" of the South Sea archipelago. From the first moment of his desertion from the whaler at Nukuheva harbour, to his escape from the Typea Valley; or, to speak plainer, from the first line in the first page to the last in the last, interest, information, and the most genial freshness of description, pervades the whole volume. It is all but visiting the Marquesas ourselves. Poee-Poee becomes a familiar dish, tappa is cinctured round your loins; you are sanctified by the Taboo, and clamber up the long shaft of the cocoa nut, while reading this singular production. Throughout it there are snatches of drollery that are occasionally irresistibly comic; drollery of observation; and sometimes reflections of the most unstrained and winning pathos. If alone as likely to correct the popular notion regarding the character of savages, this book will perform a high mission, and is deserving of every possible praise. The Typees, to whom the writer's remarks are especially referable, are a nation of Indians, totally ignorant of any intercourse with white men; Europeans have never ventured to anchor on their shores; civilization has never insinuated itself among their bamboo huts; they have the reputation of being the most sanguinary barbarians, and the most ruthless *cannibals* in the Marquesas. * * *

MARGARET FULLER

[A Challenge to the Sewing Societies]†

"Typee" would seem, also, to be the record of imaginary adventures by some one who had visited those regions. But it is a very entertaining and pleasing narrative, and the Happy Valley[1] of the gentle cannibals compares very well with the best contrivances of the learned Dr. Johnson to produce similar impressions. Of the power of this writer to make pretty and spirited pictures as well as of his quick and arch manner generally, a happy specimen may be seen in the account of the savage climbing the cocoa-tree p. 273, vol. 2d. Many of the observations and narratives we

† New York *Tribune* (April 4, 1846). Fuller was one of the very earliest American female journalists, thanks to her philosophical kinship with the erratic reformer Horace Greeley, founder and editor of the *Tribune*.

1. The lexicographer Samuel Johnson (1709–1784) wrote the popular mildly philosophical *History of Rasselas, Prince of Abyssinia* (1759), which depicts a moderately "Happy Valley" but discourages the hope of attaining great happiness anywhere.

suppose to be strictly correct. Is the account given of the result of the missionary enterprises in the Sandwich Islands of this number? We suppose so from what we have heard in other ways. With a view to ascertaining the truth, it would be well if the sewing societies, now engaged in providing funds for such enterprises, would read the particulars, they will find in this book beginning p. 249, vol. 2d, and make inquiries in consequence, before going on with their efforts. Generally, the sewing societies of the country villages will find this the very book they wish to have read while assembled at their work. Othello's hair-breadth 'scapes[2] were nothing to those by this hero in the descent of the cataracts, and many a Desdemona might seriously incline her ear to the descriptions of the lovely Fay-a-way.

ANONYMOUS

[Happy Dog: Herman in the Typee Valley]†

Mr. Murray's *Home and Colonial Library* does not furnish us with a more interesting book than this [*Typee*]; hardly with a cleverer. It is full of the captivating matter upon which the general reader battens; and is endowed with freshness and originality to an extent that cannot fail to exhilarate the most enervated and *blasé* of circulating-library loungers. * * *

Mr. Melville, after all his troubles, is most agreeably surprised and sumptuously entertained. He is provided with provisions and attendants, a home is given to him, and the houris of whom he had dreamt on board the Dolly—but lovelier far than even his excited imagination had pictured them—hover around him, eager to enhance his bliss. Enviable Herman! A happier dog it is impossible to imagine than Herman in the Typee Valley. * * *

We have been somewhat prolix in the narration of this history; first, because the book of Mr. Melville is really a very clever production; and, secondly, because it is introduced to the English public as authentic, which we by no means think it to be. We have called Mr. Melville a common sailor; but he is a very uncommon sailor, even for America, whose mariners are better educated than our own. His reading has been extensive. In his own province, the voyages of Cook, Carteret, Byron, Kotzebue, and Vancouver[1] are familiar to him; he can talk glibly of Count Bouffon and

2. Readers of the adventurous parts of *Typee* were irresistibly reminded of the eloquent account by Shakespeare's Moor of how he won Desdemona's love through his stories of his "hair-breadth 'scapes" (*Othello* 1.3.136); Melville would have read these comparisons edgily, because, as the public could not know, he had won Elizabeth Shaw's love just that way.

† London *Times* (April 6, 1846).

1. George Vancouver, English navigator (1758–1798), left his name in the Pacific northwest. John Hawkesworth edited the journals of Captain James Cook and Philip Carteret, *Account of the Voyages . . . in the Southern Hemisphere* (1773). John Byron (1723–1786), grandfather of Lord Byron, published a narrative of the shipwreck off Chile of the *Wager*, on which he was a midshipman, *The Narrative of the Honourable John Byron . . . Containing an Account of the Great Distresses Suffered by Himself and His Companions on the Coast of Patagonia, from the Year 1740, till Their Arrival in England, 1746. With a Description of St. Jago de Chili, and the Manners and Customs of the Inhabitants. Also a Relation of the Loss of the* Wager*, Man of War, One of Admiral Anson's Squadron* (London: Baker & Leigh, 1768); Melville purchased a copy in December 1849. Lord Byron's father was Captain John ("Mad Jack") Byron. Otto von Kotzebue, naval explorer in the service of Russia (1787–1846), wrote *A New Voyage round the World . . . 1823–1826* (London, 1830).

Baron Cuvier,[2] and critically, when he likes, of Teniers.[3] His descriptions of scenery are lifelike and vigorous, sometimes masterly, and his style throughout is rather that of an educated literary man than of a poor outcast working seaman on board of a South Sea whaler. * * *

The evidence against the authenticity of the book is more than sufficient to satisfy a court of justice. Our limits forbid us to prosecute it further. Of evidence against the smartness and talent of the production there is none. The author, be he American or Englishman, has written a charming little book, and, as it appears to us, with a laudable and Christian purpose. Let it be regarded as an apology for the Pagan; a plea for the South Sea Islanders, governments, and missionaries, who understand so little the sacred charge which God commits to them, when He places in their hands the children of His favoured sunny regions; may they learn from fiction a lesson which experience has hitherto failed to teach them—viz., that if it be needful for Christianity to approach the Heathen, it is equally necessary that it should approach him *reverently and tenderly*.

HENRY T. CHEEVER

[A Prurient Book, That Preys on the Imagination]†

If this [*Typee*] be not sheer romance, (which there is reason to suspect,) it is the extremely exaggerated, but racily-written narrative of a forecastle-runaway from an American whale ship, who met the fortune those fish did in fable, that jumped out of the frying-pan into the fire. He had life among Marquesan cannibals to his liking; a plenty of what pleases the vicious appetite of a sailor, or of sensual human generally. He seems to have been pleased enough with his captors, but glad to get away uneaten. "Horrible and fearful (he says) as the custom of cannibalism is, still I assert that those who indulge in it are in other respects humane and virtuous!"

The book abounds in praises of the life of nature, *alias* savageism, and in slurs and flings against missionaries and civilization. When the author alludes to, or touches matters of fact at the Sandwich Islands, he shows the sheerest ignorance, and utter disregard of truth.

The work was made, not for America, but for a circle, and that not the highest, in London, where theatres, opera-dancers, and voluptuous prints have made such unblushing walks along the edge of modesty as are here delineated to be rather more admired than we hope they are yet among us. We are sorry that such a volume should have been allowed a place in

2. French naturalists Georges Louis Leclerc, Count de Buffon (1707–1788), and Georges Leopold Dagobert, Baron Cuvier (1769–1832), called the founder of comparative anatomy (and was the brother of Frederick Cuvier, 1773–1838, also a naturalist).
3. David Teniers, realistic Flemish painter of low-life scenes, is either the father (1582–1649) or the son (1610–1690).

† H. C., New York *Evangelist* (April 9, 1846). C. Randall Cluff in a paper communicated to Hershel Parker in 2000 showed that the reviewer was Henry T. Cheever, later the author of *The Whale and His Captors* (1850), which Melville mentions in *Moby-Dick*. Cheever had been in Hawaii while Melville was there, and was the brother of George Cheever, the Congregationalist minister of John Wiley's church in New York. Until the end of 1846 George Cheever was the editor of the *Evangelist*, a Presbyterian paper (a somewhat awkward conflict, though the doctrinal differences between the sects would have seemed minor in the eyes of those of other sects).

the "Library of American Books." It can only have been without reading it beforehand, and from deference to the publisher on the other side.[1]

We have long noted it as true in criticism, that what makes a large class of books bad, immoral, and consequently injurious, is not so much what is plainly expressed, as what is left to be imagined by the reader. Apply this rule to the work in hand, and while everybody will admit it is written with an attractive vivacity, and (except where it palpably lies) with great good humor, it cannot escape severe condemnation.

ANONYMOUS

[Melville's Moral Obtuseness]†

We were not disposed at first to say any thing against this volume [*Typee*]. The rather free and easy style in which it is written, and the sort of clever-heartedness that seemed indicative of the author's disposition, made us suppose that whatever errors of fact the book contained were probably unintentional, and that its statements with some allowance might be received. On reading farther, however, we entirely changed our views; for it is difficult to believe that the author was not actuated, either by a perverse spirit of intentional misrepresentation, or that he is not utterly incapable, from moral obtuseness, of an accurate statement. If we were to sum up the author's mind, gathered from his whole book, we should say he was one who had first been fretted out of good humor by civilized life; that he had then become a wanderer until he had forgotten his ill nature, and also the advantages of civilization; that he had then chanced to be thrown, for a while, on the Sandwich Islands, where he perhaps came into uncomfortable collision with the civil authority, which engendered a special prejudice against those who were striving to civilize those islands; that he had then been wandering two or three years longer in various parts of the earth, till what he remembered of the Islands of the Pacific had become a sort of confused mass in his own brain; after which he came to this country, and sat down to write a book. These facts seem to be scattered along through the volume. This moral obtuseness appears, whenever there is an opportunity for exhibiting a correct spirit. No opportunity slips by for giving a glowing description of savage life, and for launching quips and small anathemas against civilization. For missionaries and missionary labor,—except in *general*,—he has a special abhorrence. The cause of Missions is a good thing—except where it raises man from cannibalism to civilization. If he meets a native female Islander, she is a goddess;—if a missionary's wife, she is a blowzy looking, red-faced, fat oppressor of the poor native—reducing him to the station of drudge. All statements made by missionaries are, with slight exceptions, infinitely

1. This review was an inside job, written for Wiley, who had in fact rushed the book into print without reading it, having relied on the opinion of his partner, George Palmer Putnam, who had accepted the book in London and had relayed it to Wiley with the enthusiastic recommendation of the great Washington Irving. The Cheevers knew very well that Wiley would be demanding expurgations, and, as Cluff suggests, because at least one of the Cheevers, Henry, had read the book, the brothers may have pointed out to Wiley the passages in the first edition that most needed to be deleted.

† New Haven *New Englander*, 4 (July 1846): 449–50.

exaggerated; and those whose money is asked for the blessed work of sending men to elevate the character of the savage, had best be careful that their money does not go into other channels. The vices of savages are much overdrawn; and for the vices that do exist, their counterpart, or what is worse, is found every where in Christian nations. Of truths of general history he seems to know nothing. The fact of the depopulation of the Sandwich Islands, seems to him to be something new; and this is specially brought about by the efforts of missionaries and their hypocrisy. The fact that wherever civilization comes in contact with savage life, there the savage wastes away; or at least that this has been so, wherever the Saxon[1] stock comes into contact with it; he never thought of;—and now for the first time seeing the fact he gives his own crude explanation of it, and would have the world then receive his volume as a work of authority. Now justice to the cause of truth demands that we say, that whosoever shall read this book, and its statements touching the Islands of the Pacific, should ask themselves a moment as to the capability of a man to give an accurate statement of moral facts, when, according to his own showing, he has not been in a course of life calculated greatly to improve his moral eye sight. They should think who and what is writing, when such facts are recorded; and then, though they may not think the writer *intends* to misrepresent, they will at least be prepared to resist the false impressions, which a book with such statements is most certain to produce. The book is not without literary merit. It is a very companionable one. As a specimen of the lighter writing of the day, it is entitled to notice. But as to the writer's ability to treat on some of the matters of his volume, it would rank well with Joseph Smith's[2] competency to give an exegetical work on the book of Genesis, or Bishop Southgate's to pronounce on the authenticity of an ancient MS. among the Armenians of Turkey.[3]

WILLIAM O. BOURNE

Typee: The Traducer of Missions†

An apotheosis of barbarism! A panegyric on cannibal delights! An apostrophe to the spirit of savage felicity! Such are the exclamations instinctively springing from our lips as we close a book entitled "Typee: a

1. Here, English, or British.
2. Upstate New York autodidact mystic (1805–1844), the translator and publisher of *The Book of Mormon*, a gift to him from the angel Moroni. Smith was killed by a mainly Protestant mob in Carthage, near the Mormon town of Nauvoo, Illinois, partly because he had recently sanctioned polygamy.
3. Horatio Southgate, while a student at the Calvinist Andover Theological Seminary, had converted from the Congregationalist Church to the Episcopal Church and gone to Turkey as a missionary in 1836–38 and again in 1840–44. In the April 1845 *New Englander* had appeared a long (pp. 244–72), virulent personal attack on the renegade Southgate ("Right Reverend Horatio Southgate, Missionary Bishop of the Protestant Episcopal Church of the United States, to the dominions and dependencies of the Sultan of Turkey") for allegedly trying to keep the "dissenting" Protestant missionaries (many of them trained at Andover!) away from their chance to evangelize the Armenians and other groups under Turkish rule. More than two hundred years after dissenters had settled New England to escape the persecution of the Anglican Church, some American Protestants still could ferociously hate all things Anglican (or in its American form, Episcopalian). In *Typee*, Melville had hurled himself into a fiery religious cauldron, kept bubbling for centuries with ever-freshened Christian hatred.

† New York *Christian Parlor Magazine*, 3 (July 1846): 74–83.

Residence in the Marquesas," lately published in Wiley & Putnam's interesting "Library of American Books." It is even so, reader! A work coming from the press of one of the first houses in this country, and published simultaneously by the same house in London, gemmed with enthusiastic descriptions of the innocent felicity of a savage tribe—tinselled with ornate pencillings of cannibal enjoyments—drawing frequent contrasts between the disadvantages and miseries of civilization, and the uninterrupted paradisiacal bliss of a tribe which has traced in ominous characters of blood on the outer battlements of its natural fortresses of rock and mountain that omnipotent and talismanic "*tabu*."

We do not purpose in our examination of this book to enter into an analysis of its contents, its literary execution, or its claims to fidelity in the general description it gives of the people among whom our author resided during a period of some four months. Such a "review" belongs properly to the acknowledged critical journals of the day, and would occupy far more space than we can appropriate to such a task. Nevertheless, we shall attempt to canvass some of its statements, wherein the cause of *missions* is assailed, with a pertinacity of misrepresentation and degree of *hatred*, which can only entitle the perpetrator to the just claim of traducer. We know what we are saying when we use these terms; we have read this book word by word; we have studied it carefully with reference to these very points, for to all that appertains to the missionary work we are sensitively alive; and were gladdened when we first saw it, with the prospect of learning something more from an impartial source concerning the practical operations of the missionary enterprise in that interesting region of the earth known as *Polynesia*. But we were soon disappointed; instead of a calm and unbiased view, we have on every occasion a tissue of misrepresentation, and detraction of the labors of the devoted men and women who have exiled themselves for the purpose of carrying the blessings of the gospel to some of the most degraded and benighted children of Adam—who have been debased from the spiritual "image and likeness" of their God to naked and roving savages; and who, in the wildness of their character and the helplessness of their social condition, are but little exalted above the "brutes that perish."

We do not look at the history of the missionary work from the merely enthusiastic or poetic point of view. We do not view the overthrow of the system of idolatry, the destruction of *Maraes*, the burning of idols, the cessation of infanticide, the extinction of the Arcoi, the abandonment of cannibalism, the termination of desolating wars, and the partial substitution of the arts of civilization and of peace—together with the construction of a written code of laws and the presentation of a written and printed language to the Polynesians, as a brilliant establishment of Christianity in the hearts of the people of those insulated tribes. These are but pulling down the outworks of the fortresses of idolatry and spiritual degradation, which have their foundations in the hearts and souls of the people. But these results are not the less brilliant because the soul, which has become inwrought in its inmost tissues with everything that is corrupt and degraded, has not been taken, as it were, by a Gabriel,[1] and in a moment, by a stupendous miracle of all-sanctifying grace, washed from its

1. The archangel entrusted with making significant announcements.

impurities and prepared for the fullest beamings of unsullied bliss: they are not the less splendid because the laborers have not been able to pour the broad beam of day upon every soul, and extirpate every vestige of barbarism and sin. No! the history of the world furnishes no parallel to the reformation in the South Seas, except under the preaching of the inspired apostles, when the enlightened and refined idolators of Rome and Greece forsook the temples of their gods, both known and unknown, and offered up the daily incense of praise from the altars of sanctified hearts, and sang round their wide domains the songs of a purer faith.

The results of the missionary enterprise are to be measured not by what is to be done, but by what has been achieved; and when a contrast is made between the present condition of the Polynesians, and that in which they were found by the early navigators, and even only thirty years ago, callous indeed must be the heart of that man who would not rejoice with every lover of the gospel, in the change which has been made in their political and social condition—deeply stained with depravity must he be who would not be gladdened by the improvement in their moral and spiritual aspects. Partial the change certainly is, and it could not, in the short space of one generation, be much more extensive under the circumstances, than we see it; but the work has been begun—the citadel has been thrown down, the altars destroyed, and the Christian religion acknowledged as infinitely superior to the ancient and bloody superstitions.

It would occupy too much space for us to present these contrasts now; we shall incidentally allude to them, and as we have future occasion shall endeavor to make known to the Christian public the past, the present, and the future of the missionary work. And here we revert to the task before us.

The book whose title we have given may be called a respectable publication. The author seems to possess a cultivated taste and a fair education, but a deficient reading, and to this latter cause we assign many of his errors of general fact, as well as gross misstatements concerning the missionaries. With a lively imagination and a good and often graceful description, together with a somewhat happy strain of narrative, he has written an attractive history of personal adventure and unwilling *abandon* among the happy and sequestered Typees.

Come, oh celestial Spirit of Primitive Bliss! and waft me on thy golden pinions to the lovely abodes of the Typeeans![2] Bear me, oh genial spirit of unrefined progression, to the eternal landmarks of thy tabued proves! Waft me, benignant genius of undisturbed repose, to the overhanging peaks of thy untainted solitudes, where the dulcet strains of an uncaring minstrel shall thrill the sighing spirit with the newer life of a "healthful physical enjoyment!" Come, oh yearning soul of the angelic FAYAWAY! let me henceforth be the chosen partner of thy tabued pleasures! let me bask beneath the mild ray of thine azure eye, and repose on the swelling oval of thy graceful form! No lingering love for the griefs of a civilized home

2. This extraordinary paragraph, presumably intended as sarcastic, perfectly conveys the disturbing ambivalence that morally upright people like Horace Greeley felt when reading *Typee* and some later writings by Melville. They felt seduced into immoral sensations, which they were ashamed of.

shall tempt *me* to leave thy presence! no profane desires for the pains and miseries of these pent-up cities and sin-cursed streets, and fashion-worshipping crowds, shall distract my sighing heart, and cause me to leave thee weeping amid the dashing waters of thine entrancing abode. With thee let me sport on the mirror-surface of thy sacred waters, and ramble beneath the refreshing shades of the cocoa and the palm! No recreant will I be to thy matchless love—no reckless fugitive from thy twining arms! So let me rest, and no palaces of earth, or lands of other names and customs more refined, shall tempt me to flee thy loved abodes.

We have remarked that this is a respectable book, but yet we have doubted whether it were worth a notice. To give circulation to such statements as our author makes may seem unwise, but as extracts from it of the nature we condemn are obtaining a channel through the public journals, we have determined to do our part in the work of making him known to the public. Although ordinarily we should not have regarded it as being worth an extended notice, we think the mode of its publication and the rank it holds, deserve a passing remark. In the first place it is dedicated to Hon. Lemuel Shaw, *Chief Justice of Massachusetts*; it is published by Wiley & Putnam, in *New York* and *London*; and it is permanently lettered XIII. and XIV. in their *Library of American Books*. These considerations serve, then, to give the book a respectability and an influence which it could not have without them, and without which we should probably have passed it by.

Before proceeding to our investigation of his statements concerning the missionaries, we remark of the book generally: 1. It is filled with the most palpable and absurd contradictions; 2. These contradictions are so carelessly put together as to occur in consecutive paragraphs; 3. It is throughout laudatory of the innocence and freedom from care of the barbarians of the South Seas, particularly the Marquesans; 4. It compares their condition with civilized society as being the more desirable of the two; 5. It either excuses and wilfully palliates the cannibalism and savage vices of the Polynesians, or is guilty of as great a crime in such a writer, that of ignorance of his subject; and, 6. It is redundant with bitter charges against the missionaries, piles obloquy upon their labor and its results, and broadly accuses them of being the cause of the vice, misery, destitution, and unhappiness of the Polynesians wherever they have penetrated. * * *

Some of our readers will perhaps be surprised at our review of "Typee: or Residence in the Marquesas." It is a matter of surprise to us that such a work could have obtained the name of Lemuel Shaw, and such a press as that of Wiley & Putnam. The author manifests a palpable ignorance in regard to every question of interest, and redeems that feature by laying his tribute upon the altar of cannibal felicity and barbaric society. He looks at the savage life with a captivated eye, and seals his approbation with a constant phrenzy to be freed from this happy vale—being in almost daily fear of finding himself hashed in the most approved style of Typee epicurean rites, or tenderly roasted and served up in calabashes for "the regal and noble Mehevi" and his chiefs!

We have borne with the pretensions of this book as though it were a narrative of real events. It may be, and likely is, though somewhat highly colored. But whether true or false, the real or pseudonymic

author deserves a pointed and severe rebuke for his flagrant outrages against civilization, and particularly the missionary work. The abuse he heaps upon the latter belongs to the vagabonds, fugitives, convicts, and deserters of every grade—and there let it rest. We have meditated nothing in a spirit of harshness or "bigotry." We have sought only to present the other side of the case to the public, with the hope of rendering at least a little service to the cause of truth; while we regret that a book possessed of such high merit in other respects, should have been made the vehicle of so many prejudiced misstatements concerning missions.

We purpose on some future occasion to take a view of the present state of the missionary work, and what is needed to make it more efficient and exceptionless than it is, and shall endeavor to give every side a fair hearing. We shall probably give Typee a glance among the authorities, as a specimen of that genus of writers whose poetry and poetic feelings lead them to admire only what is savage, and condemn, under assumed pretexts, the ripening fruit of the gospel of Christ. The author having anticipated and challenged investigation, will doubtless duly appreciate our pains-taking in comparing his statements with the contemporaneous reports of Capt. Wilkes[3] and other authorities.

ANONYMOUS

[Melville and Missionary Fund-Raising—A Review of *Omoo*][†]

To those who have revelled and rioted on the first book it will be only necessary to say that here is more of the same sort. Instead of the primitive valley of stark paganism, and unsophisticated nature, the mongrel mixture of savagism and Christianity is here the subject. There is no lack of scenes, however, that are wholly Captain Cookish,[1] and painted in the liveliest colors—The author seems not to be a prejudiced witness, yet in describing the results of the Missionary operations he pitches his tune a full octave below the Missionary Herald's—indeed, he tells some stories which would not have a very happy effect upon the contribution box at a "Monthly Concert." We intend to give a few extracts one of these days.

3. The *Narrative of the United States Exploring Expedition* (1844) was the five-volume report of the 1838–42 American expedition to the Pacific and Antarctic under the command of Charles Wilkes, U.S.N. (1798–1877). The prose was pedestrian and highly biassed (e.g., in strong support of the Protestant missionary interests), but some of the engravings depicting remote places and peoples were remarkable. (Hawthorne had passed up a chance to go on the voyage as literary recorder.) The repeated references to Captain Charles Wilkes in the reviews in this section suggest just how important the Exploring Expedition was in expanding the American consciousness, comparable in attention-getting to landing Americans on the moon, but with the difference that in the mid-1840s any American could foresee immediate commercial, political, and religious opportunities and hazards from the news Wilkes had brought home.

† Boston *Chronotype* (May 6, 1847).

1. Like that in the journals of Captain James Cook.

[THURLOW WEED?]

Who Reads an American Book?†

It is but a few years since this question was sneeringly asked in English Reviews![1] But such questions are no longer asked. American Books, "that *are* Books," have not only readers but admirers in England.

Mr. Melville's "Omoo," which appeared simultaneously in London and New York, is thus spoken of in the London Spectator of April:—"Unlike most sequels, "Omoo" is equal to its predecessor. * * * The true characteristic of the book is its nautical pictures. The crew of the Julia were a mixture of all nations, but with a character in each. Among them was a New Zealander, who, rated harpooner, ranked as a gentleman in the South Sea whaling school. From Melville's account, this man required nothing but the help of a novel-grinder to be turned into the hero of a romance. He had all the gloom and mystery of a Byronic hero;[2] but the unsentimental sailors rather attributed to him Cannibal propensities than secret griefs. * * * The extracts we have given will indicate the character of the composition; which is clear, fresh, veracious and full of matter. Melville's descriptions not only convey distinctly what he means to convey; but they abound in subordinate, or incidental pictures respecting the whole of the life described."

ANONYMOUS

[Melville's Spite against Religion and Its Missionaries]‡

These lively sketches [of *Omoo*] steal one's favor and approbation in spite of himself. They are so graphic and spirited, and narrate scenes of such strange and surpassing interest, that the reader is borne along through the checkered history, without stopping to inquire how much is true or false, or what reliance is to be placed on the author's most deliberate statements. But on arriving at the end and looking back, the conviction speedily arises that it is but little else than romance. Its only merit is what

† Albany *Evening Journal* (May 12, 1847).

1. I.e., magazines, especially the quarterlies (appearing in four issues a year). Americans never forgave Sydney Smith (1771–1845) for his scorn in the *Edinburgh Review* (1820): "In the four quarters of the globe, who reads an American book?" The British magazines (brilliantly written by the best critical minds in this golden age of essay writing) were often reprinted (in full or part) in the United States soon after publication, even in smaller cities like Albany. All any American printer needed was a single imported copy of a magazine because, in the absence of an international copyright law, nothing had to be paid to a British publisher or author; and American printers had a ready market for any such cheap reprint in a young America dedicated to self-improvement and mutual advancement.
2. Like the melancholy hero of Lord Byron's poem *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* (1812–18) who travels across the Mediterranean region and central Europe, brooding aloud amid sublime classical ruins, in picturesque natural settings, or while visiting places filled for him with significances, such as battlefields, where he can display the range of his knowledge of and feeling for history. Such a figure, easy to parody, was enormously influential on Melville's generation, the way only Ernest Hemingway influenced other writers in the twentieth century. Upon the publication of the first part of *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*, Lord Byron wrote that he awoke to find himself famous; Melville quoted that passage, self-deprecatingly but tellingly, in a letter of July 24, 1846, seeing himself as Byronic.

‡ New York *Evangelist* (May 27, 1847).

a well-told tale, founded on some Polynesian facts, would have. The author's mendacity is sometimes flagrantly visible, as well as his spite against religion and its missionaries.

"B."

[Polynesian Cannibalism *vs.* American Slavery]†

"Typee" proved the most successful hit in book-making, since the publication of Stephens's first book of Travels.[1] An English critic said it was "Yankee all over."[2] By which he meant that it was entirely new, fresh, and devil-may-care; free from the dry, stale, and wearisome conventionalities of trained literature. It was a book of itself, not made up of pickings from other books, but from the personal observations and individualities of the author. This was enough to ensure it popularity; but, in addition to this, it opened to the reading world views of a new existence, more novel and startling than any of the revelations of Swedenborg,[3] in his "Heaven and Hell." In truth, Typee resolved "the great problem of the age," and proved that happiness was not only possible without the aid of pastry cooks, lawyers, tailors, and clergymen, but that men could be happier without these excrescences of civilization than with them. It proved another important fact, the most important of all facts for Americans, that Slavery is not, as Charles J. Ingersoll told Mrs. Maury,[4] indigenous to the tropics, and, like mosquitoes, always most troublesome when the weather is hottest. It is true that the Typees eat their enemies, but then they do not eat them alive; they have the humanity to wait until their victims are dead before they begin to feast upon them. Here, we reverse the rule, and feed on each other while living. One dead enemy was sufficient to feast a whole tribe of Typees; but with us, a hundred slaves hardly suffice to furnish food for one Southern family. The Typee craunches the tendons and muscles of his dead enemy between his molars, but inflicts no pain upon

† New York *National Anti-Slavery Standard* 7 (May 27, 1847): 207.

1. The first book by John Lloyd Stephens (1805–1852) was *Incidents of Travel in Egypt, Arabia Petraea, and the Holy Land*, to which Melville alludes in *Redburn*. An even greater adventure resulted in his *Incidents of Travel in Central America, Chiapas and Yucatan* (1841), memorably illustrated by the English artist who accompanied him, Frederick Catherwood.
2. Modern scholars have not yet discovered this review. Parker's computer search of the known reviews (transcribed into his working copy of *The New Melville Log*) reveals nothing close to this phrase. Some surviving papers have not yet been searched for references to Melville, so this reference may yet be discovered. However, "Yankee all over" had been a common phrase in American newspapers for two decades to denote with astonishment and slight contempt behavior signally characteristic of the inhabitants of Connecticut and on to the east and north.
3. Emanuel Swedenborg (1688–1772), Swedish scientist and mystic who influenced many later writers (e.g., William Blake and Ralph Waldo Emerson) by his descriptions of his frequent conversations with angels and his theory of God as divine man and man as God.
4. Sarah Mytton Maury (1801–1849), Liverpool-born author, was cousin by marriage to the pioneer student of ocean currents, Lt. Matthew Fontaine Maury, whom Melville cites in a footnote in *Moby-Dick* as the author of *Explanations and Sailing Directions to Accompany the Wind and Current Charts* (Washington, 1851). In *Statesmen of America in 1846* (p. 322) she quotes her question: "'Do tell me,' said I, 'what *you* think of slavery?'" Ingersoll's reply: "'As I think of musquitoes, and other visitations of Providence,' said he, 'the less said about them the better; besides, they are always the most intolerable in the hottest places.'" Ingersoll (1782–1862), congressman from Pennsylvania and an anti-abolitionist, wrote *Inchiquin, the Jesuit's Letters* (1810), purporting to be travel letters by a Jesuit whose approval of what he saw in the United States contrasted with the scorn displayed by most British visitors.

him; but with us, the Calhouns, Clays, and Polks,[5] feed daily upon the sweat, the tears, the groans, the anguished hearts and despairing sighs, of living men and women; they do not eat the insensible flesh of their dead slaves, but they lacerate it when alive with whips, and cauterize it with hot branding-irons. We would advise our readers who are sick at heart, from reading the daily reports of the murders committed by our army in Mexico;[6] or of the inhuman cruelties of our slaveholders at the South; or of the daily outrages upon the rights of humanity practised by Christian judges and lawyers in our Halls of Justice, to turn for relief to the amiable savages of Typee, whose greatest cruelty consists in devouring the body of an enemy who has been killed in a hand-to-hand scuffle.

Omoo is a continuation of the author's adventures in the Pacific after he escaped from the valley of the Typees. It is written in the same free and jocular style as Typee, but it contains nothing so purely novel as some of the scenes recorded in that pleasant and bewitching volume. The sketches of sea-life and character, are very lively and accurate, and the insight which it gives of the state of society in the half-Christianized islands of the Pacific, entertaining and instructive. Mr. Melville has had the misfortune to encounter the same kind of doubters, who attempted to discredit the narratives of Bruce,[7] but we have found nothing in his volumes that contradicts or transcends the many oral and written accounts we have received from travellers in that part of the world which he visited.

HORACE GREELEY

Up the Lakes, 8 June 1847 [The *Tone* Is Bad]†

Blest, since leaving New York, with a long-coveted opportunity to devote some hours to the deliberate perusal of a few lately issued works of remarkable character, I wish to speak of them in revisal or confirmation of what may have already been uttered. * * *

5. Southern Democrats and Whigs are lumped together here as supporters of slavery. John C. Calhoun (1782–1850), senator from South Carolina. Henry Clay (1777–1852), senator from Kentucky. James K. Polk (1795–1849) of Tennessee; president 1845–49.
6. The Mexican War (1846–48) gained the United States vast territories in the Southwest, including California, but it was from the start condemned by some Whigs as an "Executive's War" started by President Polk over a trumped-up international incident, in violation of the Constitution, which gives Congress war-making powers. Even a few idealistic Democrats, like William Cullen Bryant, editor of the New York *Post*, opposed the war, fearing that slavery would be extended into any new lands that were gained. The Whigs, initially caught off guard by the popularity of the war, soon realized they could win the next presidential election by running one or another of Polk's generals—Zachary Taylor, as it turned out, eating their idealistic cake while gaining the presidency.
7. James Bruce (1730–1794), author of *Travels to Discover the Source of the Nile* (1790), cruelly denounced (by Dr. Johnson and many others) as having faked his adventures, vindicated only long afterward, and in the 21st century celebrated for his reliability.

† Written by the editor of the New York *Weekly Tribune*, Horace Greeley, during his upstate vacation, and sent down for publication (June 26, 1847). Greeley was a Whig, but unreliable as a partisan because of his own quixotic causes, one of which had been the mainly Democratic cause of "Repeal"—repeal of the union between England and Ireland and the reestablishment of a National Irish Parliament, which happened to be the cause that Gansevoort Melville, Herman's brother, had chosen as his ticket to a national reputation. Gansevoort, an honorary Bostonian by virtue of being a grandson of a hero of the Tea Party of

—"OMOO," by HERMAN MELVILLE, is replete alike with the merits and the faults of its forerunner, "Typee." All of us were mistaken who thought the fascination of "Typee" owing mainly to its subject, or rather to the novel and primitive state of human existence it described. "Omoo" dispels all such illusions and proves the author a born genius, with few superiors either as a narrator, a describer, or a humorist. Few living men could have invested such scenes, incidents and persons as figure in "Omoo" with anything like the charm they wear in Melville's graphic pages; the adventures narrated might have occurred to any one, as others equally exciting have done to thousands of voyagers in the South Seas; but who has ever before described any so well? "Typee" and "Omoo," doubtless in the main true narratives, are worthy to rank in interest with Robinson Crusoe and in vivacity with the best of Stephens's Travels.—Yet they are unmistakably defective if not positively diseased in moral tone, and will very fairly be condemned as dangerous reading for those of immature intellects and unsettled principles. Not that you can put your finger on a passage positively offensive; but the *tone* is bad, and incidents of the most objectionable character are depicted with a racy lightness which would once have been admired but will now be justly condemned. A *penchant* for bad liquors is everywhere boldly proclaimed, while a hankering after loose company not always of the masculine order, is but thinly disguised and perpetually protruding itself throughout the work. This is to be deplored not alone for the author's sake, nor even for that of the large class which it will deter from perusing his adventures. We regret it still more because it will prevent his lucid and apparently candid testimony with regard to the value, the effect and the defects of the Missionary labors among the South Sea Islanders from having its due weight with those most deeply interested. It is needless here to restate the hackneyed question as to the proper mode of effecting the desired renovation of savage, heathen tribes.—"Preach the Gospel to them," say the devout: "convert them to Christianity, and their Civilization follows of course."—"Nay," interposes another class: "you must civilize them, to some extent, before they can even comprehend Christianity, much less truly embrace and adhere to it."—The Truth obviously lies between these assertions, or rather, embraces them both. A Christianity which does not include Civilization, a Civilizing which does not involve Christianizing, will not answer. Above all, alike to their conversion and their civilization a change in their Social condition and habits—a change from idleness and inefficiency to regular and well directed industry—is absolutely essential.—Without this, the convert of to-day is constantly in danger of relapsing into avowed and inveterate heathenism. This is the moral of Mr. Melville's facts, as indeed of all other impartial testimonies on the subject. Reiterating my regret that he has chosen so to write that his statements will not have that weight with the friends of Missions which the interest of Truth requires, I bid adieu to "Omoo."

December 1773, introduced Greeley to the Repeal audience at Boylston Hall on October 30, 1843, where they both spoke, Gansevoort much more eloquently than the editor. Greeley mocked Gansevoort's "gas and glory" rhetoric in the campaign of 1844, and he held a special ambivalent attitude toward the younger brother, Herman, from the time he entered the New York literary scene.

[GEORGE WASHINGTON PECK]

[Melville as Sexual Braggart]†

* * * Omoo seemed so easy—the fancy so naturally loves to wander away to those fair islands whither the romance of nature has been gradually banished—that it appeared the lightest task that could be, to run off a few pages giving a common-place estimate of its merits, and selecting some of the most striking passages, after the approved custom of reviewers. * * *

Perhaps it is from this feeling that we have a difficulty in arranging our thoughts into order, and so beginning what we would say in the regular manner. In general, and at first, we can barely observe that we have read Omoo with interest, and yet with a perpetual recoil. We were ready to acknowledge that it was written with much power; that the style, though loose in sentences and paragraphs, was not without character, and the pictures it presented vividly drawn; yet we were ready to say, in the words of the old epigram—

"I do not like thee, Doctor Fell,"[1] &c.

The reckless spirit which betrays itself on every page of the book—the cool, sneering wit, and the perfect want of *heart* everywhere manifested in it, make it repel, almost as much as its voluptuous scenery-painting and its sketchy outlines of stories attract. It is curious to observe how much difficulty the newspapers have had in getting at these causes of dislike. They are evidently not pleased with the book; but—as most writers would, sitting down to write a hasty notice of it immediately after running it through—the daily critics find nothing worse to say respecting it than that they do not believe it. Generally, all over the country, in most of the newspapers which we have seen, (and our opportunities are quite as extensive as any one could desire,) this has been the burden of the short notices of the press, where intended to be at all critical. * * *

Alas, Omoo finds it easier to address himself to the pit of the world than to the boxes. His heart is hard, and he prefers painting himself to the public of his native land as a jolly, rollicking blade—a charming, rattling, graceless ne'er-do-well. He meets no man, in all his wanderings, whom he

† Signed GWP, New York *American Whig Review*, 6 (July 1847): 36–46. This review did Melville irreparable damage with many people, appearing as it did a few weeks before his marriage into a staunchly Whig family with staunchly Whig associates in Boston. Peck was an enemy driven by a weirdly perverse sexual jealousy, a hopeless alcoholic of good New England family, at this time exiled to New York City, where he lived in successively more squalid lodgings, ultimately a cock loft (a tiny garret or attic space under a pitched roof) under the eaves of a dilapidated house near Canal Street, nursing his venom for his final onslaught on Melville: an unforgettably vicious and unimaginably long review of *Pierre* in 1852. Shortly afterward, his last long-suffering friends, including Richard Henry Dana Jr., bundled him aboard a ship for Australia, hoping that once out of sight in the Antipodes he could be out of mind. Peck is a recurrent type in journalism, the malicious reviewer who attacks then retreats into suspended animation until his chosen victim publishes another book; it was Melville's bad luck that Peck fixated on him. Bound copies of this very popular political magazine, usually shortened as the *Whig Review*, the rival to the *United States Magazine and Democratic Review*, were around on library shelves to humiliate Melville all his life, decades after the Whig party itself died.

1. Dr. John Fell (1625–1686), dean of Christ Church, Oxford, subject of the infamous epigram by the satirist (and Fell's cheeky student) Thomas Brown (1663–1704), an anglicization of an epigram by the Roman poet Martial.

seems to care for—no woman whom he does not consider as merely an enchanting animal, fashioned for his pleasure. Taken upon his own showing, in two volumes, and what is he but what a plain New Englander would call a "*smart scamp*?"

The phrase is a hard one, but it is certainly well deserved. Here is a writer who spices his books with the most incredible accounts and dark hints of innumerable amours with the half-naked and half-civilized or savage damsels of Nukuheva and Tahiti—who gets up voluptuous pictures, and with cool, deliberate art breaks off always at the right point, so as without offending decency, he may stimulate curiosity and excite unchaste desire. Most incredible, we style these portions of his stories, for several reasons.

First: He makes it appear always, that he was unusually successful with these poor wild maidens, and that his love-making was particularly acceptable to them. Now, if this had been so, we fancy we should have heard less of it. A true manly mind cannot sit down and coin dramas, such as these he gives us, for either others' delectation or its own. It is nothing new to hear conceited men boast of their perfect irresistibleness with the sex. "Oh, it is the easiest thing in the world," we remember, one of these gentry used to say, *a la* Mantalini;[2] "a woman is naturally cunning, now only you keep cool and you'll soon see through her; a man must look out for *him*self, a woman for *her*self," &c. This very person, as we happened to know, through a confidential medical friend, could no more, at that very time, when his conversation was in this lofty strain, have wronged a woman, than Charteris[3] could have committed the crime for which he was hung. Since then, and confirmed by various other experience, we have always doubted when we hear a man, especially on a short acquaintance, and most especially in a book that goes to the public, pluming himself on his virility—letting it be no secret that he is a "very devil among the women." Once, at a refectory in———, we were supping with a friend, when, the tables being full, there came a little, long-knecked [sic], falling-shouldered, pumpkin-faced young man, and took the end of ours. We exchanged a few words, and presently he dashed, without previous preparation, into a full confession of what he styled his "peculiar weakness," in which, if we were to believe him, he let out enough to show that he might have out-bidden the Satyrs, in Spencer, for the favors of Helena.[4] Our friend, who has command of visage, drew him on till he could not help smiling at his own lies. We made inquiry, and learned afterwards that he was a sheriff's clerk, or some such sort of thing, and that his name was Joseph.[5]

Now, with a thousand such instances sleeping in the memory of years, we have no sort of confidence in the man who paints himself the hero of voluptuous adventures. Suppose any one of us—you or I, gentle reader—had been through the scenes Omoo depicts, we might—yea, even the best of

2. A cockney fop in Dickens's *Nicholas Nickelby* (1838–39).
3. Sir Patrick Charteris, the chief magistrate of Perth in Sir Walter Scott's *The Fair Maid of Perth* (1828).
4. Peck is just the man to allude so intimately to one of the lesser-known (and quite pornographic) passages in Edmund Spenser's *Faerie Queene*. In book 3, canto 10, Helena, the wife of Malbeccoes, treacherously elopes with Paridell, who soon abandons her to a herd of satyrs (goat-men), who satisfy her very well. The salacious canto is packaged, not very successfully, as a moral study of jealousy.
5. I.e., a virtuous virgin, as Joseph presumably was when he fled from his master's wife's advances, only to have her denounce him for attempting to rape her.

us—have done as badly as he represents himself to have done; cast away from home and country, drifting about on the rim of the world, surrounded by license, and brimfull of animal health, we should very probably have made sad deviations from the "path of rectitude," but should we have come home and *told of it*? On the contrary, we should have kept as dark about the matter as possible; and nothing but some overmastering passion or motive could ever have made us reveal it. Native manhood is as modest as maidenhood, and when a man glories in his licentiousness, it raises a strong presumption that he is effete either by nature or through decay.

And this remark leads to our *second* reason for doubting the credibility of these amours. Taking the evidence of imbecility afforded by the reason just given, in conjunction with all that Omoo would have us believe he did (for he does not speak out in plain words like old Capt. Robert Boyle),[6] and it cannot be possible, without Sir Epicure Mammon's[7] wished-for elixir, that he could have the *physical ability* to play the gay deceiver at such a rate among those brawny islanders. This body of ours is very yielding it is true, and if a man resolutely sets his mind to imbrute himself he may go a great way; but a half year of such riotous life would have sufficed for one so proud of his exploits (if, indeed, this very display is not rather the result than one of the causes of a *blasé* condition—perhaps it is both).

Thirdly. We do not believe these stories, for the reason that those poor savage maids could not possibly have been such as Omoo describes them; they are not half so attractive. We have seen the drawings of Catlin,[8] the elaborate French engravings of the South American Indians, Humboldt,[9] Deprez,[1] also some of New Zealand and those of our Exploring Expedition,[2] and never yet saw we a portrait of a female half so attractive as the dumpiest Dutch butter-woman[3] that walks our markets. Time out of mind we have heard whaling-captains dilate on the Marquesan beauties, but we always reflected that they appeared under peculiar advantages to the eyes of rough men just from long, greasy cruises, being somewhat negligently clad and without any of the restraint of civilization. Omoo may titillate the appetites of many of his readers by describing how he swung in a basket for hours at Tahiti with "some particular friends of his," but he touches us not a jot. He is quite welcome to his "particular friends," they are not ours. The next stout boat-steerer that came along, with a rusty nail or a shred of an old bandanna handkerchief, would disturb, we fear, our domestic felicity—knock us out of the basket, and go to swinging himself. * * *

6. The sexual adventurer in William Rufus Chitwood's *Voyages and Adventures of Capt. Robert Boyle in Several Parts of the World* (London, 1726).
7. Sir Epicure Mammon is the sex-hound knight in Ben Jonson's *The Alchemist* (1610).
8. George Catlin (1796–1872), painter historically important for his unique records of American Indian life.
9. Alexander, Baron von Humboldt (1769–1859), great naturalist, physical geographer, and meteorologist who explored South America and wrote about it in *Voyages au régions équinoxiales du Nouveau Continent, fait en 1799–1804* (Paris, 1807).
1. Maybe a misprint for Captain Guillermo Dupaix, whose drawings of the Mayan sites were published in *Antiquities of Mexico* (London 1830–48) by Edward King, Viscount Kingsborough.
2. Charles Wilkes was head of the great U.S. Exploring Expedition (1838–42).
3. This is the ethnic slur of a Yankee forced to work in what had been New Amsterdam. Many New York citizens were still entirely Dutch in lineage, although the language was dying out. (Melville's mother seems to have spoken Dutch at home, at least to some members of the older generations, but she did not speak it to her children.)

In fine we cannot help believing the missionary influence to be much more beneficial than this book represents it—perhaps it is true that the lower orders of the people are afraid of the missionaries; the missionaries may have found it necessary to keep them so. Perhaps the whole condition of the people of Tahiti is still very bad, yet we will not believe it to have been so bad as he makes it appear, (alas, the island is now in the hands of the French!) We have ample ground for discrediting his evidence, from his own admissions, from the spirit he everywhere manifests in giving his testimony, and from the unreasonableness of his statements. It is to preserve the poor barbarians as much as possible from such as he tells us he was that the missionaries remain exiled among them, and all that they ever did learn of good has been through those pious, or it may have sometimes been fanatical, instructors. However defective the teaching, however misguided the enthusiasm, that has aided this work of benevolence, we cannot but have some confidence in the sincere endeavors of honest men. Seen through the pages of Omoo, the missionaries affect us like some mysterious baleful *presence*, some invisible power that delights in exercising arbitrary sway over the poor natives, without any adequate motive—it cannot be so. Men do not change their natures by sailing a few thousand miles over the rotundity of this orb. The missionaries did not go there to harass and torture people, and it is not in the nature of things to suppose that the climate affects their brains and turns plain men and women into absolute fools. The contact of savage with civilized life, is always the worse for the former, and no nations have ever suffered more severely than the unfortunate Polynesians; it is a duty the enlightened of the earth owe those whose bodies they have poisoned with their fell diseases, to do all that can be done for their souls. Let us, therefore, have other subjects for satirical writing than missionary ill success. * * *

WILLIAM O. BOURNE

[Traducer of Loftier and Better Men]†

To the Editor of The Tribune:

Your own protracted absence from home, and a more recent tour on my part, have prevented me from offering you a few strictures on the last work of Herman Melville—the last and least of that class of published narratives which, while professing to present truth, are filled with the most palpable errors, if not willful misrepresentations. * * *

From a consideration of the whole subject I pronounce Mr. Melville's book, so far as its pretended facts are concerned, a tissue of uninformed misrepresentations, of prejudiced ignorance, and of hostility characteristic of one who loves South Sea adventure for South Sea abandonment and "independence." His caricatures of the Missionaries, whether in the pulpit or surrounded by a crowd of gaping natives—his contempt for the constituted authorities and the consuls and officers—his insubordination—his skulking in the dark where he could not be seen by decent men—his choice of low society—his frequent draughts of "Pisco" or other liquors—his

† W[illiam] O. B[ourne], New York *Tribune* (October 2, 1847).

gentle associations with Tahitian and Marquesan damsels—and the unsullied purity of his life and conversation, all entitle him to rank as a man, where his absurdities and misstatements place him as a writer—the shameless herald of his own wantonness, and the pertinacious traducer of loftier and better men. * * *

WILLIAM O. BOURNE

[Melville's Encouraging of "Rum and Romanism"]†

* * * The latest writer on Polynesia [Herman Melville], is the author of the work named at the head of this article. This is the second narrative from his pen, Omoo having been preceded by "Typee: a Residence in the Marquesas." Of the author or his works we design not now to inform our readers, further than they have reference to the practical operations of the missionary enterprise in Polynesia. . . .

The invasion of Tahiti by the French, and the Roman Priests, is made the subject of running comment through several chapters. * * *

The prominent principle which led to the rejection of the Romanists[1] is obvious to a thinking mind. The half-refined idolaters see in the image of the Virgin, the crucifix, the paintings, the wafer, and the beads, only the elements of a baptized idolatry. Much as we may deplore their intellectual incapacity to discriminate here, it does not modify or change the fact. That they are not alone to be condemned for this obliquity, is evident from the history of the world. * * *

It might be a matter of some interest to an enlightened statesman to inquire, to what extent French captains have the privilege of invading the rights of Americans abroad, of dishonoring the flag of the United States, and menacing the lives of those under its protection. * * * If the French government and its officers present themselves to the world as the agents in forcing rum and Romanism[2] on the less refined nations of the earth, it may not be unimportant to the American people to know how far their rights are to be invaded in the persons of their fellow citizens who exile themselves in the noblest of all human enterprises. * * *

ANONYMOUS

[The Total Failure of Protestant Missionaries]‡

When "Typee" first appeared about a year ago, there was not a little speculation afloat among the critics as to the author and the character of the

† "Missionary Operations in Polynesia," New Haven *New Englander* (January 1848).

1. Roman Catholics (always derogatory).
2. Decades later, in 1884, the Republican nominee for president, James G. Blaine, lost the election partly because one of his Protestant supporters outraged many Catholics (by that time a substantial voting bloc) by calling Democrats "the Party of Rum, Romanism, and Rebellion."

‡ "Protestantism in the Society Islands," Baltimore *United States Catholic Magazine and Monthly Review* (January 1848). The place of publication of this magazine was not coincidental: Maryland had been hospitable to Catholics from its founding.

book. While all agreed in awarding to the author, whoever he might be, the credit of uncommon merit as a writer, some were inclined to suspect the genuineness of the work, or, at least, the accuracy of the narrative. The adventures related were so startling, the descriptions of life in the happy valley of Typee were so glowing, and the style of the book was, withal so poetical and romantic, that some were half inclined to view the whole as a gorgeous fiction—a son of Robinson Crusoe—portraying an Eutopia[1] in Savagedom; while others, of a more sober temperament, professed to believe that the basis of the story might indeed be true, but that the details of the narrative were greatly exaggerated, or, at least, highly colored. To these last named critics it seemed almost to surpass belief, that a common mariner before the mast should have turned out so gifted a writer of his own adventures, and should have produced a narrative almost as smooth and as highly wrought as Irving's Astoria.[2]

Others again, professing to be more conversant with life in Polynesia, or to be personally acquainted with the author, could see nothing in the work which was either impossible or improbable; and were therefore disposed to regard it as a veritable book of travels, worthy of fully as much credit as others of the same kind. Those who had read the Journal of the late Captain Porter,[3] published several years ago in this country, and replete with incidents fully as marvelous as those related by the author of Typee, could see nothing in the latter work at all incompatible with its genuineness and substantial accuracy; and these were even inclined to smile at the skepticism of those more dashing critics, who, without knowing any thing either of the author or of the extraordinary people among whom he was thrown in the South Seas, ventured to pronounce at once that the narrative was a fit sequel to Robinson Crusoe and Gulliver's Travels.[4]

When the work was republished in England, the general opinion of the English press was decidedly favorable to its genuineness and accuracy. Douglas Jerrold's paper, the London Sun, the London Examiner, the London Spectator, and the London Critic—not to mention several other English periodicals,—all professed to receive and vindicate the work as a genuine book of travels, entitled to credit so far as the substance of the narrative goes. We will be pardoned for inserting a few extracts from the literary notices furnished by the papers just named.

The London Examiner says:

> The authority of the work did not seem very clear to us at first, but on closer examination we are not disposed to question it. A little

1. From Sir Thomas More's *Utopia* (1516), meaning "Nowhere land," an imaginary work about the best form of government, modeled on early voyage literature.
2. Irving's *Astoria* (1836) was an account of John Jacob Astor's fur-trading empire, in Oregon, very much from the perspective of Astor, known as the wealthiest man in the United States.
3. Captain David Porter, *Journal of a Cruise Made to the Pacific Ocean* (Philadelphia, 1815). Melville had not read it when he started *Typee*, but he used it in some later-written sections.
4. See a notice of *Omoo* in a late number [8 May 1847] of the *Literary World*, a periodical of great merit, published in New York. [Reviewer's note.] Evert Duyckinck celebrated the authenticity of Melville's *Typee*: "In the city of New York . . . from which the three or four of [Commodore David] Porter's surviving officers hailed originally, Typee was remembered in years far back as the theme of many a dinner-table yarn, when men used to tell longer and *stronger* stories over their Madeira than is now the fashion among modern sherry drinkers. And while the world abroad were showing their acuteness in detecting Mr. Melville as a veteran bookmaker, who, being master of a brilliant style, had ingeniously fashioned a most readable piece of Munchausenism while sitting in his library, his work was at once recognised as a genuine narrative in the city where it was published."

> coloring there may be here and there, but the result is a thorough impression of reality.

The London Spectator thus answers the objection of the London Times—that the book is too well written to have been the production of a common sailor:

> Had this work been put forward as the production of an English common sailor, we should have had some doubts of its authenticity in the absence of distinct proof. But in the United States it is different. There social opinion does not invest any employment with discredit, and it seems customary with young men of respectability to serve as common seamen, either as a probationership to the navy or as a mode of seeing life. Cooper and Dana are examples of this practice.

The London Critic says:

> The author is no common man. The picture drawn of Polynesian life and scenery is incomparably the most vivid and forcible that has even been laid before the public . . . The coloring may be often overcharged, yet in the narrative generally there is a vraisemblance that cannot be feigned; for the minuteness and novelty of the details could only have been given by one who had before him nature as his model.

In a second notice, the same periodical adds:

> We have said in our first notice of this book that there is a vraisemblance that never could be counterfeit, and have furthermore found evidence of the assertion in the book just quoted [John M. Coulter's *Adventures in the Pacific* (Dublin, 1845)].

The New York Courier and Enquirer thus refers to these testimonies in its second notice of Typee.

> No doubt is entertained of the truth of this book by many persons here, whose intimacy with the author and general acquaintance with the subject peculiarly fit them to form an intelligent opinion on this point. And in England, as far as we can judge from the criticisms of the press, the general opinion appears to be favorable to its accuracy.

A further confirmation of the statements made in "Typee" is found in the publication, which some months ago went the rounds of the Eastern papers, to the effect, that Toby, the mysterious comrade of Mr. Melville, who had disappeared from the valley of Typee, is said to have reappeared and vouched for the truth of all the statements of the narrative so far as he himself was concerned in them. If this be the fact—and we see no reason for doubting it—it will go far to strengthen the conviction, which seems already pretty general among the best judges, that there is no valid reason for suspecting the truth of Mr. Melville's narrative of adventures in Polynesia and the South Seas. * * *

But there is one portion of his statements which is not so immediately connected with the narrative of his own personal adventures, which is of a much graver character, and which is therefore still more entitled to credence. We refer to his remarks and reasonings on the results of Protestant missionary enterprise in Polynesia. A Protestant himself, who takes no pains to conceal his prejudice against the Catholic church, it is not to

be supposed that he had any motive for under-rating the effects produced by the labors of the Protestant missionaries on the morals and civilization of the South Sea Islanders; and it is not to be presumed that he was disposed either to misstate or to deal in exaggeration on this subject. During a sojourn of several months among the inhabitants of the various groups of islands scattered over the Pacific, in which he became acquainted with the doings of the missionaries and mingled with the islanders on terms of social intimacy, he had ample opportunities to judge accurately of the social condition and of the alleged Christian character and standing of the latter.

Though he tells many stern truths which must be painful to the liberal advocates of Protestant missionary enterprise in the United States, yet he sets down nought in malice; he deals not in denunciation or invective; he evidently writes more in sorrow than in anger; and he makes his statements rather with a view to direct public attention to the subject and to have the evils alleged by him corrected by the proper authority, than to quench or even to check missionary zeal among his Protestant brethren. This seems, in fact, to have been one of the principal objects he had in contemplation in publishing his adventures in the South Seas; and he tells us as much in the preface, to both Typee and Omoo.

Moreover, he takes special pains to confirm all his more important statements on this subject by the testimonies of other Protestant travellers of unimpeachable veracity and great weight of authority. What he tells us, then, under this head, may be fully and implicitly relied on as the truth. And we have no doubt that the popularity and general circulation of his two works will have a most beneficial influence on the opinion of the religious community in this country in regard to Protestant missions in the Pacific; and that his statement of stubborn facts which fell under his own observation, united with his graphic and life-like pictures of Polynesian manners and morals, will undeceive many well disposed persons who had permitted themselves to be misled and to be robbed of their money by the glowing statements and pious frauds of the missionaries.[5] A man who dares tell the truth under such circumstances, if not a hero, may well be set down as an honest man and a benefactor of his species. Let the truth be told, no matter who suffers by it,—seems to have been the motto of Mr. Melville; and in these days of boasted enlightenment and independence, but of real truckling and subserviency to popular prejudice or clamor, this is, at least, an unusual maxim for the guidance of any young writer who courts popularity. We are delighted to find that Mr. Melville has obtained popularity without seeming to court it; and we are disposed to award much honor to his fearless independence.

From the statements scattered through the two works of Mr. Melville, it appears that Protestant missionary effort in the Pacific has turned out a complete failure, if not an arrant imposition on the pious credulity of the public. Brother Jonathan[6] is equally as liberal, and almost as

5. As stated in this magazine (vol. vi., November, p. 580, note,) the *second* edition of Typee does not contain those passages which are most unfavorable to the Protestant missions. Every body can understand that a book, which recorded such unpalatable truth, required to be *expurgated* in order to suit the *general* demand. The statements of Omoo show plainly that the *expunging* of Typee was not dictated by any zeal for the diffusion of the truth. [Reviewer's note.]
6. Type name for an American, like John Bull for an Englishman.

good-natured, as his respected sire; but we are deceived as to his real character, if he does not become "wide awake," when he has once discovered a gigantic scheme devised by certain reverend men for draining his pockets of their surplus cash under false pretenses.

The statements of our author, extracted from "Typee," in reference to the religious condition of the Sandwich Islanders, have been already spread before the American public in a recent publication.[7] We propose at present to furnish a rapid analysis of what he says in reference to the doings of the Protestant missionaries at Tahiti and the other islands of the Society group, and to the influence exerted by their teaching on the civilization of the inhabitants. We shall confine ourselves to his last work—Omoo. * * *

Such is then, from unquestionable evidence, the sad and deplorable condition to which the Tahitians have been reduced under the teaching of the Protestant missionaries. After having labored to bestow upon the natives the blessings of Christian civilization, for a period of nearly sixty years; after having expended millions of money for their conversion to Christianity; after having boasted a thousand times of their brilliant success "in evangelizing the heathen," and thereby succeeded in extorting immense amounts from the credulity of their confiding friends in England; the whole mission turns out to be, not only a complete and signal failure, but a disgrace and a burning shame to the Christian name. The Tahitians are now infinitely worse off,—physically and morally,—than they were before they saw the face of the godly missionaries. They have been mocked with the vision of civilization which they were destined never to realize. The missionaries have grown rich at the expense of their boasted converts. The latter have become the victims of the trust they reposed in the professions of the former. They were promised every thing, and, in the end, received nothing. Poverty, degradation, extinction—were their unfortunate lot and doom. They were left nothing else to hope for. * * *

How are we to explain this singular phenomenon? Are we to say, that the missionaries were nothing but arrant hypocrites and impostors? We would not take upon ourselves the responsibility of making such a charge. We may even believe that most of them were upright and honest men, who sincerely wished to convert and civilize the natives. Many of them certainly labored with great apparent zeal and earnestness. Whence, then, their notorious failure? It can be explained only on the principle which all ecclesiastical history proclaims as true and certain,—that no sect, separated from Catholic unity, has ever succeeded, or can ever succeed, in converting and civilizing a single heathen nation. God does not bless the efforts of proud separatists; he gives his graces only to the meek and humble laborer in his own vineyard: and his divine Son has accordingly said, "he that gathereth not with me, scattereth."[8]

It is only the pure and immaculate spouse of Christ—the Catholic church—that can be the fruitful mother of *his* children. Protestantism, like all other human sects, is necessarily doomed to barrenness. "Unless God build the house, in vain do they labor who build it."[9] The failure of the Tahitian mission, is but an additional link in the long chain of

7. General Evidences of Catholicity, &c. By M.J. Spalding, D.D. Appendix to Lecture III. See also U.S.C. Magazine, vol. vi, November, 1847. [Reviewer's note.]
8. Luke 11.23 (Douay Bible).
9. Psalm 127.1 (Douay Bible).

reasoning which clearly establishes the falsity of Protestantism and the truth of Catholicity. View the subject in what light you will, this is the conclusion which every logical Christian mind must necessarily reach on the subject. The Protestant sects have always and every where signally failed in their missionary enterprises; therefore they cannot claim to have the blessing of God; therefore, they are not the heirs to the promises made by Christ to his first ministers in the commission which he gave them to teach all nations.

This is, we have not the slightest doubt, the principal cause of the total failure of Protestant missionary effort in the islands of the Pacific, and the world over. But there are other causes of a secondary nature, connected with the mode employed by the missionaries for operating on the minds of the natives. They relied entirely too much on mere worldly means; and too little on the assistance of God. They hoped to convert the natives to Christianity by distributing among them Bibles and tracts;—a means neither warranted by the Scriptures themselves, nor conformable to the teachings of reason and experience. They also placed too much confidence in those exciting exhibitions of fanaticism, generally known by the name of "revivals." These may carry away the multitude for the moment, but they usually produce no permanent results. When the excitement dies away, the converts made under its influence also usually fall off; and often become worse sinners than they were before. * * *

E. B. H[ALL]

Catholic and Protestant Missions†

Whatever may be thought of the character of Christians, and the success or failure of their efforts to carry forward their religion to the fulfilment of its predictions, there can be but one opinion of the magnitude of the work, or the vast amount of life and treasure devoted to its accomplishment. We are apt to mourn, if not to murmur, at the apathy of Christ's followers, their selfishness and sloth, their unfaithfulness to the Master and distance from the mark, the narrow limits of the kingdom and the exceeding slowness of its advance. And reason enough is there for sorrow and humiliation; imperfection, inconsistency, and wickedness enough is there within the kingdom itself, so called, within the very pale of the Church, in the hearts and lives of avowed disciples. Looking at the religion as it stands in its record and its Lord, looking at the commission given and the object proposed, the powers and means possessed, yet the little absolutely accomplished, the view is dark, the thought oppressive. We wonder not that those "of little faith" stumble, that those of no faith cavil, or that impatient believers look round for some new agencies, a new order of society, or a different administration of religion. It is easy, by fixing the mind on failure and evil alone, to work ourselves up to any degree of disappointment or despondency. But is this a Christian view? Is it reasonable, in consideration of our nature, the nature of the work, the providence

† E. B. H., Boston *Christian Examiner,* 44 (May 1848): 417, 437–38.

of God, or the actual results already seen? Even if these results were far less distinct and beneficent than they are, though it be said that they are not yet tested and by many are disputed, we would still maintain that the efforts themselves, the zeal, the liberality, the self-sacrifice, the unwearied and constantly extended enterprise, in the grand work of converting the world to Christ, are evidence of strong faith, and must bring a blessing to their authors, if to no others.

Our attention is called to the subject now by the simultaneous appearance of many publications, Catholic and Protestant, touching every portion of the vast missionary field, and suggesting as well as answering many inquiries as to veritable facts and positive results. The works whose titles we have given make but a small part of those recently published of similar character. And not only works which treat directly and exclusively of missions, but books of travels, of scientific research, of general literature, biography, and fiction, have entered this province to a greater or less degree, and thrown light upon many of the most interesting points. Among these might be mentioned the five large volumes of the "United States Exploring Expedition," and the lighter productions of Melville, to both of which we shall have occasion to refer. It is rather singular that the last named works, "Typee" and "Omoo," whose character, as fact or fiction, has been a matter of question, are taken up by the Catholics as authority, and made the groundwork of a new attack upon Protestant missions. At the same time, the Catholics themselves are making new efforts, and sending out new publications and professions, with reference to the propagation of their faith in this country and abroad. Not attempting to go over the whole field, nor wishing to take sides in the controversy, we propose to give some idea of the facts of the case, as they stand in the publications themselves, and to refresh our own, possibly our readers', acquaintance with the extent and progress of the great missionary enterprise. * * *

But the Catholics bring other charges. They have always said that Protestant missions would be failures, because of the heresy that taints and enervates them. They now aver that they are failures, and that the very best of them are proved to be so by notorious facts, and even by Protestant confessions. These allegations they are making at this moment, and in this country, more confidently and busily, we think, than at any former period. And what is their authority for these statements, so startling and important to all, if true? Their chief authority, so far as we learn, is Mr. Melville, in the two books to which we referred at the beginning,—"Typee" and "Omoo." These works are favorably noticed and largely used in the "Catholic Magazine," whose title and official authority we have given in full. The numbers of that journal for November and January last contain remarkable specimens of assertion and exultation, in regard to the utter futility, if not iniquity, of all the South Sea missions; and Melville most, though not alone, is adduced as establishing the important fact. It is undeniable that Melville does favor this view of the matter. We have only glanced at his books, but have read enough, and find enough in these extracts before us, if fairly given, to be satisfied that he has made assertions which ought either to be admitted or refuted. For ourselves, we place little reliance on these assertions; first, because the real design of the books that contain them is a matter of dispute; next, because the author himself has dropped them from the second edition of "Typee"; then,

because the assertions do not all agree; and lastly, because they are unsustained, and contradicted, by other writers and eyewitnesses. Indeed, we doubt if Mr. Melville himself is not surprised that any one should form an opinion, or change an opinion, on this great subject, from his books alone; especially when it is seen, that, as we just implied, all his assertions are not against the missions, but some of them strongly in favor. Similar accounts of intemperance and licentiousness witnessed in the islands are often given by missionaries themselves, as greatly to be deplored, but still not incompatible with solid good. The passages in which he not only declares the beneficial effect of missions, but ascribes some of their failures to "disorders growing out of the proceedings of the French," are not quoted in the "Catholic Magazine." We do fear a want of ingenuousness in these assailants. We have sought in vain to verify some of their allegations, and even direct quotations, by referring to the authorities given. Some quotations are so torn from their connections as to prove nothing, and some are not easily found, though we cannot assert, and mean not to imply, that they are not to be found at all. But the mode of referring to them is unsatisfactory, and unwarrantable as the basis of such serious charges and sweeping conclusions. * * *

[WILLIAM GILMORE SIMMS?]

[Review of *Mardi*]†

Mr. Melville is well and favorably known as the writer of two very pleasant books of South Sea experience, in which the critic persuaded himself that he found as many proofs of the romancer, as of the historian. Mr. Melville alludes to this doubt and difficulty, and somewhat needlessly warns us that, in the present work, we are to expect nothing but fiction. His fiction takes the form of allegory rather than action or adventure. His book, in fact, is a fanciful voyage about the world in search of happiness. In this voyage the writer gives a satirical picture of most of the deeds and doings of the more prominent nations, under names which preserve the sound of the real word to the ear, while slightly disguising it to the eye. In this progress, which is a somewhat monotonous one, the author gives us many glowing rhapsodies, much epigrammatic thought, and many sweet and attractive fancies; but he spoils every thing to the Southern reader when he paints a loathsome picture of Mr. Calhoun,[1] in the character of a slave driver, drawing mixed blood and tears from the victim at every stroke of the whip. We make no farther comments.

† Charleston, South Carolina, *Southern Quarterly Review* 16 (October 1849): 260–61.

1. *Mardi* was fiction, but contained an allegorical section interpolated during 1848, partly on the new European revolutions, partly on the U.S. presidential campaign of that year. In Ch. 162, "They Visit the Extreme South of Vivenza," Melville depicts the land of slavery, lorded over by "one Nulli," obviously John C. Calhoun, always ready to nullify a federal law not explicitly authorized by the Constitution or else passed by Congress and upheld by the Supreme Court. (Nullification was an extreme concept, but it was Calhoun's strategy for forestalling more extreme secessionists in his state and elsewhere in the South.)

ANONYMOUS

[Civilized Bodies, Barbarous Souls]†

* * * The Highlander is crowded with poor Irish emigrants, for which the cupidity of the captain has provided no accommodation and to whom the villainy of the shipping agents has given no warning of the hardships in store for them at sea. * * * As might have been foreseen, pestilence soon made its appearance on board the Highlander. Five hundred human beings crowded in the hole of a vessel without ventilation, except at the hatches, without comfort, without cleanliness, without adequate food, carry the seeds of fever infallibly about them. The ship became a floating pest house; and every day the tribute of mortality was paid to the stormy deep—six, seven, eight, nine and ten bodies of a morning, were thrown overboard. "We talk of the Turks," says the author, alluding to the neglect of the poorer classes of emigrants shown by the English and by American legislators. "We talk of the Turks and abhor the Cannibals, but may not some of *them* go to heaven before some of *us*? We may have civilized bodies, and yet barbarous souls. We are blind to the real sights of the world; deaf to its voice, and dead to its death. And not till we know that one grief outweighs ten thousand toys will we become what Christianity is striving to make us."[1]

* * *

ANONYMOUS

[The Improving Condition of "Live Cargo"]‡

* * * The details of the horrors aboard such a vessel as the Highlander, when returning to New York with a cargo of poor Irish emigrants, are peculiarly deserving of notice; we believe some amelioration has taken place, and that some care is now taken of these live cargoes of human beings, but still these emigrant vessels require to be closely watched.

ANONYMOUS

[A Magisterial Caution from "Maga"]*

* * * We are now in Liverpool. Much of what Redburn there sees, says, and does, will be more interesting to American than to English readers,

† London *Observer* (October 7, 1849).

1. It is fair to remark that the legislature of Great Britain has provided by the "Passengers' Act" of the last session, a most efficient and practical remedy against the evils here complained of [Reviewer's note].

‡ London *Morning Post* (October 29, 1849).

* *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine,* 66 (November 1849): 567–80. These short excerpts from a very long review of *Redburn* ("long story about a short book," Melville wrote in his journal after reading it in London) capture the high seriousness, not to say pomposity, of "Maga" (the self-applied sobriquet, from "Magazine," as if it were the only one worth counting). Melville may

although to many even of the latter there will be novelty in his minute account of sailor life ashore—of their boarding-houses, haunts, and habits; of the German emigrant ships, and the salt-droghers and Lascars, and of other matters seemingly commonplace, but in which his observant eye detects much that escapes ordinary gazers. We ourselves, to whom the aspect and ways of the great trading city of northern England are by no means unfamiliar, have derived some new lights from Redburn's account of what he there saw. Clergymen of the Church of England, we are informed, stand up on old casks, at quay corners, arrayed in full canonicals, and preach thus, *al fresco*, to sailors and loose women. Paupers are allowed to linger and perish unaided, almost in the public thoroughfare, within sight and knowledge of neighbours and police. * * *

Neither will he, we apprehend, gain much praise, that is worth having, for such exaggerated exhibitions of the horrible as that afforded in chapter VI. of his second volume. Passing through Lancelott's Hey, a narrow street of warehouses, Redburn heard "a feeble wail, which seemed to come out of the earth. * * * I advanced to an opening, which communicated downwards with deep tiers of cellars beneath a crumbling old warehouse; and there, some fifteen feet below the walk, crouching in nameless squalor, with her head bowed over, was the figure of what had been a woman. Her blue arms folded to her livid bosom two shrunken things like children, that leaned towards her, one on each side. At first I knew not whether they were dead or alive. They made no sign; they did not move or stir; but from the vault came that soul-sickening wail." We cannot quite realise the "opening" in question, but take it for granted to be some sufficiently dreary den, and are only puzzled to conjecture how, considering its depth, the woman and children got there. Redburn himself seems at a loss to account for it. This, however, his compassionate heart tarried not to inquire; but, perceiving the poor creatures were nearly dead with want, he hurried to procure them assistance. In an open space hard by, some squalid old women, the wretched *chiffonières*[1] of the docks, were gathering flakes of cotton in the dirt heaps. To these Redburn appealed. They knew of the beggar-woman and her brats, who had been three days in the pit or vault, with nothing to eat, but they would not meddle in the matter; and one hag, with an exaggerated morality that does not sound very probable, declared "Betsy Jennings desarved it, for she had never been married!" Turning to a more frequented street, Redburn met a policeman. "None of my business, Jack," was the reply to his application. "I don't belong to that street. But what business is it of yours? Are you not a Yankee?"

"Yes," said I; "but come, I will help you to remove that woman, if you say so."

"There now, Jack, go on board your ship, and stick to it, and leave these matters to the town."

Two more policemen were applied to with a like result. Appeals to the porter at an adjacent warehouse, to Handsome Mary the hostess, and Brandy Nan the cook at the Sailors' boarding-house, were equally fruitless.

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have invented the harrowing scene in Launcelott's-Hey, or parts of it, but he had seen Liverpool from the bottom, as "Maga" had not. Ironically, at the same time in 1839, Evert A. Duyckinck, some of whose reviews are reprinted herein, was seeing Liverpool from above: from the Adelphi, the best hotel, high up a hill overlooking the Mersey.

1. Ragpickers.

Redburn took some bread and cheese from his dinner-room, and carried it to the sufferers, to whom he gave water to drink in his hat—descending with great difficulty into the vault, which was like a well. The two children ate, but the woman refused. And then Redburn found a dead infant amongst her rags, (he describes its appearance with harrowing minuteness,) and almost repented having brought food to the survivors, for it could but prolong their misery, without hope of permanent relief. And on reflection, "I felt an almost irresistible impulse to do them the last mercy, of in some way putting an end to their horrible lives; and I should almost have done so, I think, had I not been deterred by thought of the law. For I well knew that the law, which would let them perish of themselves, without giving them one sup of water, would spend a thousand pounds, if necessary, in convicting him who should so much as offer to relieve them from their miserable existence." The whole chapter is in this agreeable style, and indeed we suppress the more revolting and exaggerated passages. Two days longer, Redburn informs us, the objects of his compassion linger in their foul retreat, and then the bread he throws to them remains untasted. They are dead, and a horrible stench arises from the opening. The next time he passes, the corpses have disappeared, and quicklime strews the ground. Within a few hours of their death the nuisance has been detected and removed, although for five days, according to Redburn, they had been allowed to die by inches, within a few yards of frequented streets, and with the full knowledge and acquiescence of sundry policemen. We need hardly waste a comment on the more than improbable, on the utterly absurd character, of this incident. It will be apparent to all readers. Mr Melville is, of course, at liberty to introduce fictitious adventure into what professes to be a narrative of real events; the thing is done every day, and doubtless he largely avails of the privilege. He has also a clear right to deal in the lugubrious, and even in the loathsome, if he thinks an occasional dash of tragedy will advantageously relieve the humorous features of his book. But here he is perverting truth, and leading into error the simple persons who put their faith in him. * * *

Part of the Highlander's cargo on home-voyage was five hundred emigrants, to accommodate whom the "between-decks" was fitted up with bunks, rapidly constructed of coarse planks, and having something the appearance of dog-kennels. The weather proved unfavourable, the voyage long, the provisions of many of the emigrants (who were chiefly Irish) ran short, and the consequences were disorder, suffering, and disease. Once more upon his own ground, and telling of things which he knows, and has doubtless seen, Mr Melville again rises in our estimation. His details of emigrant life on board are good; and so is his account of the sailors' shifts for tobacco, which runs short, and of Jackson's selfishness, and singular ascendancy over the crew. And also, very graphic indeed, is the picture of the steerage, when the malignant epidemic breaks out, and it becomes a lazar-house, frightful with filth and fever. * * *

When this review of his last work meets the eye of Mr Herman Melville, which probably it will do, we would have him bear in mind that, if we have now dwelt upon his failings, it is in the hope of inducing him to amend them; and that we have already, on a former occasion, expended at least as much time and space on a laudation of his merits, and many undeniable good qualities, as a writer. It always gives us pleasure to speak

favourably of a book by an American author, when we conscientiously can do so. First, because Americans, although cousins, are not *of the house*; although allied by blood, they are in some sort strangers; and it is an act of more graceful courtesy to laud a stranger than one of ourselves. Secondly, because we hope thereby to encourage Americans to the cultivation of literature—to induce some to write, who, having talent, have not hitherto revealed it; and to stimulate those who have already written to increased exertion and better things. For it were false modesty on our part to ignore the fact, that the words of Maga have much weight and many readers throughout the whole length and breadth of the Union—that her verdict is respectfully heard, not only in the city, but in the hamlet, and even in those remote back-woods where the law of Lynch[2] prevails. And, thirdly, we gladly praise an American book because we praise none but good books, and we desire to see many such written in America, in the hope that she will at last awake to the advantages of an international copyright. For surely it is little creditable to a great country to see her men of genius and talent, her Irvings and Prescotts, and we will also say her Coopers and Melvilles, publishing their works in a foreign capital, as the sole means of obtaining that fair remuneration which, although it should never be the sole object, is yet the legitimate and honourable reward of the labourer in literature's paths.

ANONYMOUS

[The "Middle Passage" for the Irish]†

* * * Occasional samples we have here of a quiet, subdued humour, but the mode of thought is serious, and even the incidents described are almost entirely cast in the same mould. Ashore—with slight variations—we have poverty, vice, and degradation: afloat, the horrors of an emigrant ship's voyage across the Atlantic are made to rival the awful scenes of the "middle passage" in a slaver. Several chapters are devoted to Liverpool—not as it is generally described to, and often seen by, American tourists, but as the sailor-boy finds it when transferred from the forecastle of his ship to the loathsome haunts of his shipmates. Persons of very delicate nerves will recoil from some of the details here given of the destitution and degradation prevalent in that abode of merchant princes. * * *

2. The term *Lynch law* or *Lynch's law* has disputed origins, but it was in use in the 1810s. "Origin of Lynch Law," printed in several newspapers, such as the Boston *Massachusetts Journal* (January 6, 1827) said it was enforced when respectable members of a community disguised themselves, blindfolded an undesirable resident, beat him severely, and ordered him to "*clear out*." (Other descriptions identified it as a phenomenon occurring south of the Potomac.) Deaths soon occurred, but they were at first dismissed as unintended consequences of the severe beating on a man with a weak constitution.

† New York *Albion,* 8 (November 24, 1849): 561. The *Albion* was a weekly edited by expatriate British for expatriate British, so its point of view was unique—a British sensibility displayed in New York City.

ANONYMOUS

[Melville: Prejudiced, Incompetent, and Truthless][†]

Falsehood is a thing of almost invincible courage; overthrow it to-day, and with freshened vigour it will return to the lists to-morrow. 'Omoo' illustrates this fact. We were under the illusion that the abettors of infidelity and the partisans of popery had been put to shame by the repeated refutation and exposure of their slanders against the '*Protestant Missions*' in Polynesia; but Mr. Melville's production proves that shame is a virtue with which these gentry are totally unacquainted, and that they are resharpening their missiles for another onset.

In noticing Mr. Melville's book, our object is to show that his statements respecting the Protestant Mission in Tahiti are perversions of the truth—that he is guilty of deliberate and elaborate misrepresentation, and—admitting the accuracy of the account which he gives of *himself*, and taking his own showing with regard to the opportunities he had to form a correct opinion on the subject—that this is our object; and we intend that Mr. Melville himself shall establish the chief counts in our indictment. The conclusion is obvious: if we thus sustain our charges against him on so serious and grave a topic, it, of course, follows that his South-Sea narratives—instead of being esteemed, as some of our leading contemporaries have pronounced them to be, faithful pictures of Polynesian life—should at once take their place beside the equally veracious pages of *Baron Munchausen*![1] In the preface to 'Omoo,' Mr. Melville says:—'In every statement connected with missionary operations, a strict adherence to facts has, of course, been scrupulously observed. . . . Nothing but an earnest desire for truth and good has led him to touch upon this subject at all. . . .' [para. 5]

This paragraph plainly manifests that Mr. Melville was perfectly aware of the nature of the task in which he was engaged when he attacked the Polynesian 'missionary operations.' Whatever else he may be guilty of, none can accuse him of want of deliberation. He is not unconscious of the importance of his statements. He intimates that he has carefully weighed every word he has penned. The passage also marks his fear, lest, in the multitude of jocularities with which his book abounds, the reader should lose sight of the 'facts' to which he has 'scrupulously observed' the truth. He quietly insinuates that he is not the only one who has noted the same deplorable condition of things, and therefore he 'deems it advisable to quote previous voyagers' in support of what he has written. Finally, he reveals his *motive* for bringing the subject thus prominently before the public. Do not err, good reader! He is no emissary of the Propaganda, no *elève* of Father Roothan,[2]

† The London *Eclectic Review,* 28 (October 1850).

1. Munchausen was the putative author of a book of fantastic imaginary travel adventures, published in England in 1785 by a German, Rudolf Erich Gaspe.
2. Father Joannes Philippus Roothaan (1785–1853), a Dutch priest, was head of the Society of Jesus 1829–1853. The reviewer means merely that Melville is not a Catholic, not a tool of the Jesuits, who were then less generally feared in England than in the United States, which was deluged with accounts of Jesuits plotting a takeover of the government, and where militant Protestants were determined to "keep" (or make) the United States a Protestant country. As Melville should have known, anything he wrote about Protestants and Catholics in *Moby-Dick* would be read in the United States in passionately partisan ways.

no 'good hater' of Protestantism, but, on the contrary—if we take his own word for it—he is an earnest lover of the truth; and, if he were not, nothing could lead him 'to touch on this subject at all!' Thus our author, with no common skill, throws the reader off his guard, and prepares him to receive, without doubt, what follows.

It is, however, worthy of notice, that he refrains from suggesting any remedy for the 'evils' he describes. He knew he could consistently recommend but one, and that would be the complete abandonment of our missions in the South Seas, and the entire withdrawal of all confidence and support from the London Missionary Society. This Mr. Melville does not propose. But why does he not? The reason is as visible as light at noonday: it would uncover the cloven foot, and betray the real object for which 'Omoo' was written! He is evidently too deeply versed in the science of human nature not to feel confident that, in whatever quarter his assertions were credited, a single penny would never be obtained to aid South Sea, or any other, 'missionary operation;' and that there, likewise, the London Missionary Society would be denounced as an 'organized hypocrisy.'

So much for the Preface. Now for the 'facts' of which it is the herald.

We begin with *Mr. Melville's* account of the rise and establishment of Christianity in Tahiti; and if it does not prove to be 'a new thing' to most well-informed persons, we are strangely mistaken. The gospel, he tells us, overthrew idolatry neither by its enlightenment of the judgment, nor by its influence on the consciences of the natives. It obtained the mastery, not by the force of persuasion, but by the persuasion of force! Here is the narrative:—

> 'Every reader of "Cook's Voyages" must remember Otoo, who in that navigator's time was king of the peninsula of Tahiti. Subsequently, assisted by the muskets of the *Bounty's* men, he extended his rule over the entire island. This Otoo before his death has his name changed into Pomaree, which has ever since been the royal patronymic. He was succeeded by his son Pomaree II., the most famous prince in the annals of Tahiti. Though a sad debauchee and drunkard, and even charged with unnatural crimes' (mark the vile insinuation), '*he was a great friend of the missionaries*, and one of the very first of their proselytes. During the religious wars *into which he was hurried by his zeal for the new faith*, he was defeated and expelled from the island. After a short exile, he returned from Imeeo, with an army of eight hundred warriors, and in the battle of Naru routed the rebellious pagans with great slaughter, and re-established himself upon the throne. Thus,' exclaims Mr. Melville, '*by force of arms was Christianity finally triumphant in Tahiti*.'—P.230.

We supposed that it became 'finally triumphant' through the influence of the 'law of the Spirit of Life in Christ Jesus.' 'Nothing more erroneous,' says Mr. Melville—'it was by the club-law of the drunken and debauched *friend of the missionaries*, Pomaree II.!' This is a fair specimen of our author's mode of dealing with the *Protestant* missions in the South Seas. It exhibits his historic fidelity and honesty of purpose. It is impossible to mistake the animus that dictated this passage—a passage that is justly entitled to take precedence in the annals of mendacity. * * *

In dealing with the evidence, we cannot be too careful in the investigation of the character and competency of the deponent. Knowing this, our readers may ask, who is Mr. Herman Melville? and what opportunities had he of forming a judgment on the 'missionary operations' in Tahiti? Before replying to those questions, we beg to premise it as our opinion, that whatever object Mr. Melville had in view when he sought to damage or ruin the character of the Protestant missionaries, we have no reason to suspect him of giving an unfair description of himself. Our information respecting him is solely derived from his own works—so he cannot take exception to our authority—and we are bound to admit the force of the supposition that *his own* account of himself is most likely to be the *best* that could possibly be given. But if so, the best is exceedingly *bad*!

In his Preface, he speaks of the advantageous position which he occupied as an observer of the 'operations' of the missionaries, and of the state of the native population. These are his words: '*As a roving sailor, the author spent about three months in various parts of the islands of Tahiti and Imeeo, and under circumstances most favourable for correct observations on the social condition of the natives*.' What the character of this 'roving sailor' is, and how he spent the 'three months' in Tahiti and 'Imeeo,' he shall himself inform us. We derive the following statements from the volume before us, and from another work by him, entitled 'Typee; a Peep at Polynesian Life,' &c., of which 'Omoo' professes to be a continuation. * * *

Our task is done. We have permitted Mr. Melville to paint his own picture, and to describe his own practices. By doing so, we have fulfilled our promise, and have proved him to be a prejudiced, incompetent, and *truthless* witness. We have thus contributed our quota towards the formation of a correct estimate of his character; and we trust that our brethren of the press in North America—where he at present resides, and where his volumes have had an extensive circulation—will do justice to the Protestant missionaries and missions in Polynesia, by unmasking their maligner—Mr. Herman Melville.

ANONYMOUS

[Unfortunate Mr. Melville]†

Mr. Melville's "Omoo" is reviewed with much severity in the October number of the London *Eclectic Review*, in an article entitled "Mr. Melville and the South Sea Missions." We think Mr. Melville has been very unfortunate in his hostility to the Protestant Missions in Polynesia. If we remember correctly a writer in *The Tribune*, immediately after the appearance of his book, by very ample and satisfactory evidence proved him to be altogether wrong in facts and opinions in this case.

† New York *International Miscellany,* 1 (November 1850): 478.

[EVERT A. DUYCKINCK]

[A Defense against the "Anti-Popery Mania"]†

A "savage" attack is made by the last (London) *Eclectic Review* upon Mr. Herman Melville on the ground of a passage or two in his earliest books, "Typee" and "Omoo," touching the missionaries in the South Seas, the point of which is considerably broken by the reviewer, who, with the anti-popery mania in his head, evidently considers the author a *Jesuit in disguise*,[1] bent on the destruction of Protestantism in the Islands. He speaks of "a certain ecclesiastical chief, to whom, we believe, Mr. Melville looks up with the most devout reverence." This is the POPE! The stupidity into which a leading idea sometimes betrays a man was never more ludicrously illustrated. We have heard of Jesuits in dominoes, in all parts of the earth, in camps, courts, and colleges, but this is the first example we have met with of a Jesuit in masquerade on the high seas in a tarpaulin. A Father Confessor in a tar bucket! A further absurdity is the arraignment of Mr. Melville for various high crimes and misdemeanors against civilized society, the civilization of well-propertied England, that is, in the humorous wanderings of "Omoo"—as if a vagabond, *in a book*, in a barbarous tropical island, was to be measured by the same standard as a polite *flaneur*[2] on the Boulevards or Regent street. "Typee" and "Omoo," it does not seem to have penetrated the wool of this reviewer, are books of incident and adventure, and as such are considered by good judges, his own London *Times* at the head of them, as exceedingly well constructed and vastly entertaining in the reading thereof. What is said of the Missionaries is not a Parliamentary report on an Exeter Hall or Tabernacle commission, but simply a matter of personal observation of an outsider, set down with a statement of the observer's exact point of view—from which, and the general spirit of the book, no reader can be at a loss in taking the testimony for exactly what it is worth. We do not undertake to say that Mr. Melville has given the whole view of the case, or to enter upon his defence, but the modicum of fact which the English journal calls upon him to restate in another edition might, we think, have been presented with a little more courtesy, less billingsgate,[3] less pruriency, less nonsense on the part of the missionary reviewer.

† New York *Literary World*, 198 (November 16, 1850): 393–94.

1. An ironic reference to a staple of extreme Protestant paranoia current in the *American Protestant Vindicator* and other publications: Jesuits pretending to be ordinary workmen at a signal from the pope would throw off their disguises and seize the country as a colony of the Vatican. The more Irish who were allowed into the United States during these years of the great famine, of course, the more Jesuits would be prowling and the more Catholics would respond to the signal to overthrow the government. The Dutch Duyckinck family in an earlier generation had moved up in religion from the Dutch Reformed Church (good enough for Melville's Gansevoort mother until she died in 1872) to the Episcopalian Church, where more of the Manhattan elite assembled. As an Episcopalian, Duyckinck looked skeptically both at the aims and accomplishments of missionary-minded Protestant sects abroad and at the anti-Catholic frenzy agitating the United States at home.
2. A dandy or an intellectual idler, from one who strolls the streets so as to be seen.
3. Coarse and abusive language such as one would hear at the fish market near Billingsgate, a gate in the old wall below London Bridge.

[EVERT A. DUYCKINCK]

[*White-Jacket* and a Warning to Melville]†

* * * Herman Melville tests all his characters by their manhood. His book is thoroughly American and democratic. There is no patronage in his exhibition of a sailor, any more than in his portraits of captains and commodores. He gives all fair play in an impartial spirit. There is no railing, no scolding; he never loses his temper when he hits hardest. A quaint, satirical, yet genial humor is his grand destructive weapon. It would be a most dangerous one (for what is there which cannot be shaken with ridicule?), were it not for the poetic element by which it is elevated. Let our author treasure this as his choicest possession, for without it his humor would soon degenerate into a sneer, than which there is nothing sadder, more fatal. In regarding, too, the spirit of things, may he not fall into the error of undervaluing their forms, lest he get into a bewildering, barren, and void scepticism![1]

ANONYMOUS

[A Jibe at "The Essential Dignity of Man"]‡

Two extracts from this book [*White-Jacket*], that appeared lately in our columns, will have prepared readers for a work of rare merit; and a perusal of it entire will fully confirm that impression—at least on the minds of those who do not "hate the sea," and have not very dainty nerves. * * *

Flogging is anathematised in as plain and emphatic language as man can use, denounced as "religiously, morally, and immutably *wrong*." Almost every occurrence on board the *Neversink* is painfully interwoven with allusions to the "gratings," past, present, or to come. And yet, in spite of this pervading effort to represent things as we fear they too often are, we cannot say that the perusal of White Jacket's narrative induces us to join him in his eloquent cry for the immediate abolition of flogging in the Navy, at all risks and every hazard. Page after page, our indignation has been aroused, and our sense of humanity and justice outraged—not by the fact that flogging is recognised by naval law, but by proofs that punishment is sometimes atrociously converted into torture, and that caprice, malice or ignorance on the part of irresponsible officers too often renders justice null and void. Curiously enough, though the comments of "Jack"[1] on naval discipline, and other matters pertaining to man-of-war life, are here set down with a remarkable air of truth, we remember no direct testimony that "Jack" himself considered flogging, *per se*, as the most intolerable of his grievances. In so able, so practical, and so large-minded an author as Herman Melville, we scarcely expected to find the "essential dignity of

† New York *Literary World*, 163 (March 16, 1850): 271–72.

1. Melville paid no attention to this mildly stated warning not to write irreverently; for the consequences, see Duyckinck's review of *Moby-Dick*, on p. 594 herein.

‡ New York *Albion* (30 March 1850). The *Albion* was a weekly edited by expatriate British for expatriate British (see the source note on p. 590 herein).

1. Type name for a sailor (also "Jack Tar").

man" and "the spirit of our domestic institutions" lugged in on such a question as this. Is it consistent with the "essential dignity," that one man should sweep the floor of Congress, and another make laws upon it which his democratic countrymen must obey?[2] If the world were big enough, and each man had his desolate island to himself, Robinson Crusoe fashion, we might keep up this pleasant non-committal delusion, but in the "world in a man-of-war," or in the world out of it, this phantom may be left to the Transcendentalists, amongst whom our author is by far too good a fellow to be classed. Ere we leave this part of White Jacket's adventures and opinions, let us moreover acknowledge how candidly he admits, that in English ships of war there is less of tyranny than in his own. * * *

2. This passage lies behind Melville's appeal in Ch. 26 of *Moby-Dick* that the "great democratic God" justify him against "all mortal critics" (meaning the reviewers, the only critics who had written on him) if he (through his narrator Ishmael) were to weave tragic graces around "meanest mariners, and renegades and castaways." Melville nursed his resentments, as much as he strove to be stoical.

Sources of and Influences on *Moby-Dick*

HERSHEL PARKER

Melville's Reading and *Moby-Dick*: An Overview and a Bibliography†

First, this note traces Melville's whaling sources, both those he already knew in January 1850 (when he devoted many hours of an unusually prolonged voyage across the Atlantic to planning the book he would start to write once he arrived in New York City), and other books and articles on whaling that he encountered later. Second, it surveys some of the most important nonnautical books that influenced *Moby-Dick*, particularly the Bible and Shakespeare. Third, it lists all these works (nautical and nonnautical) with full titles for ready reference by anyone using our footnotes to the text of *Moby-Dick*. The list includes a few documentary modern books (e.g., the one by Stuart Frank) along with those that Melville read. This note is not exhaustive; not every known or suggested influence is listed, and new sources remain to be discovered.

Melville's reading of whaling stories may have dated from the time he was a young man living with his mother in Lansingburgh, New York, north of Albany and across the Hudson River. Weeks before he sailed to Liverpool on his first voyage, the May 1839 issue of a popular New York magazine, the *Knickerbocker*, published J. N. Reynolds's "Mocha Dick: Or the White Whale of the Pacific," an account that readers found enthralling—and memorable, for people alluded to it in print for years afterward. A reviewer of *Moby-Dick* late in 1851 was to recall that every "old 'Jack-tar'" knew the story of Mocha Dick, and in the early 1840s the young jack-tar Herman Melville found good chances to know it, or part of it, from print or from sailors' yarns, and perhaps even then had chances to retell it. On May 27, 1839, the Albany *Argus* printed "Method of Taking the Whale" from the British surgeon Thomas Beale's *The Natural History of the Sperm Whale*, an excerpt that included the powerful passage about the death flurry of the immense creature, mad with his agonies.[1] If Melville

† This is a discursive guide to Melville's source books cited in the footnotes to the text of *Moby-Dick* of this Norton Critical Edition and an annotated ready-reference list of them. The discursive part is adapted from "The Breaching of Mocha Dick: January 1850," Ch. 33 of Parker's *Herman Melville: A Biography, 1819–1851*. © 1996 Hershel Parker. Adaptation reprinted with permission of the publisher, Johns Hopkins University Press.

1. Among the papers that printed a long excerpt from Beale titled "Natural History of Sperm Whale. To which is added, a Sketch of a South-Sea Whaling Voyage," were the New York *Commercial Advertiser* (August 23, 1839) and the New York *Spectator* (August 26, 1839).

somehow missed that sample of Beale, he had another chance to read it after his return from his first voyage, for a paper just across the Hudson from Lansingburgh, the West Troy *Advocate*, devoted two columns to it on October 23, 1839 (six months after the *Advocate* had reprinted one of his own earliest publications, one of two pieces of fiction he called "Fragments from a Writing Desk").

Melville may have thought of writing about whaling even before he was twenty, because he was already a writer, with two "Fragments" printed in local papers in May 1839, the month Reynolds's article appeared and the month the excerpt from Beale was published in the Albany *Argus*. Early the next month, in June 1839, Melville considered shipping on a whaler in Sag Harbor, on the eastern tip of Long Island, before he instead signed on the merchant ship for a voyage to Liverpool; he and his older brother Gansevoort went so far as to calculate distances from Manhattan to Sag Harbor by two different routes. When he sailed on the whaler the *Acushnet* at the start of 1841, Melville would naturally have thought that he might write about whaling, if he survived his perilous voyage. Later in 1841, he was deeply stirred when he read Owen Chase's account of the sinking of the *Essex* by a vengeful whale (Chase was certain as to the vengefulness), in a copy of the book providentially loaned to him, in Pacific waters not far from the site of the disaster, by a young whaleman—a son of Chase himself. Chase's narrative (and the circumstances of his first reading it) affected Melville's imagination powerfully, then and for many years later. (See the excerpt from Chase's book reprinted on pp. 527–32 herein and Melville's notes in his copy of Chase on pp. 532–35.)

Whatever Melville's thoughts in 1841–43 (his whaling years) that he might write about whaling, drawing on his experiences and what others told him, it turned out that once he jumped ship in Nukuheva in the summer of 1842 and lived (however briefly) among the Typees, he had a different sort of story to tell. His tale of life among the cannibals proved irresistible to everyone he met, from fellow whalemen and sailors in a U.S. frigate to, a little later, the chief justice of the supreme court of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and his daughter. Unquestionably, *Typee* (1846) had to be written first, and then to—establish himself as something more than a one-book writer—Melville had to produce its sequel, *Omoo* (1847), set a few months later, mainly on his second whaleship and on Tahiti. Melville's reading, in the library of the frigate the *United States* in 1843 and 1844, and in libraries ashore, continued to expose him to books on whaling he could test against his own experiences. During his work on his first books Melville acquired or became familiar with several of the works that were to become source books for *Moby-Dick*. For *Omoo* he used Charles Wilkes's *United States Exploring Expedition*, and he purchased his own copy in April 1847 for work on his third book, *Mardi*, so it was available for use in *Moby-Dick*. (See the repeated references to Wilkes in the section "Before *Moby-Dick*: International Controversy over Melville.")

Melville's *Mardi* (1849) started off in a whale ship, and he may for a while have meant it to be his book about whaling. In 1847, during the early stages of his work on *Mardi*, he acquired a copy of Frederick Debell Bennett's *Whaling Voyage round the Globe*. He owned J. Ross Browne's *Etchings of a Whaling Cruise* from early in 1847, when he reviewed it for the *Literary World* (see "Review of J. Ross Browne and Captain Ringbolt"). By early 1849, Melville knew at least one of two works by William

Scoresby Jr. on whaling, the *Voyage to the Northern Whale Fishery*, for he made offhand mention of it in his review for Evert A. Duyckinck's *Literary World* (April 28, 1849) of James Fenimore Cooper's *The Sea Lions*. These are only some of the whaling sources Melville had at hand by the end of the 1840s. He had, all in all, a good working library on whaling when he sailed for England in October 1849, arriving in time to read reviews of his fourth book, *Redburn*. His first object was to sell his fifth book, *White-Jacket* (1850), a feat he accomplished, but only after such delays that he had to relinquish his hopeful plans for making a grand tour of Europe and possibly the Near East in search of material for new books.

In January 1850, brooding in the Atlantic on his voyage home about what he might use to supplement or spark his memories of whaling, Melville would have thought of Reynolds and Chase above all other printed sources. We fixate on printed sources, but from the personal experiences of his shipmates on three whalers and their accumulations of stories from *their* previous voyages, Melville held in his memory hundreds of observations, anecdotes, and longer stories now quite irrecoverable. Merely from his own memory of Reynolds's article, Melville could plan, at sea, a book about the pursuit of a great white whale famous in the fishery by the name of Mocha Dick, or some similar name. Reynolds had vividly described the death of Mocha Dick, but Melville's white whale, rather than being killed, could sink a ship deliberately and revengefully, and then swim triumphantly away, like the consciously vengeful whale Chase described. And Chase offered Melville, ready made, a stupendous catastrophe, more awesome even than Reynolds's. As he planned a book on whaling, Melville knew he could get hold of Thomas Beale's book and any other scientific books of whaling he learned of. From printed sources already available to him, once he reached home, he knew he would lay hand on many set scenes, expected in whaling books. It was already conventional, for instance, to describe the chicanery by which villainous landsmen lured green youths to sign on a whaling voyage. Once launched, Melville could write his own vivid descriptions of captains, mates, harpooneers, and other members of a crew, perhaps even more vivid than Reynolds's splendid portrait of the first mate who killed the white whale. He would have known from the start that he could make something luridly moody from an essential (and hellish) scene that had been attempted before: a description of the tryworks at night.

If Melville on the voyage home thought he knew of all the books he would need, he soon learned better, for Henry T. Cheever's *The Whale and His Captors* was waiting for him, just published at the end of 1849 by the Harper Brothers. Finding himself in some ways scooped, Melville must have asked himself how the Harpers would respond to a new book on the same subject, but there was no stopping his creative process. Naturally, once he began the book he was led to new sources, and friends began to call books to his attention and to send him choice little passages about whales that went into his "Extracts."

The whaling books he owned or had heard about would be essential, Melville knew, for he had been from the outset a writer who borrowed heavily from previous writers (perhaps even more than from oral storytellers he had known). Desiring to appear to be writing from his own experience, he often went to some trouble to disguise the nature and extent of

the borrowing, and very early he developed a habit of making fun of some of his sources even as he failed to acknowledge them or misled readers as to the nature of his debts. Yet in his mind, Reynolds and Chase aside, the writings that meant most to Melville's ambitions as he planned his whaling book on shipboard (most of them lodged in his memory, a few newly purchased ones packed in his sea chest in the *Independence*) were primarily the sort of old books that he had surprised his editor friend Duyckinck two years earlier by borrowing and commenting on with acuity unexpected in a sailor. Melville imposed his habitual way of using books even on the classics, for he tended to take hold of them providentially, as when he discovered a large-print edition of Shakespeare early in 1849 just when he was ready to grapple with the plays and just when he had many days in Boston with not much else to do besides look in on his wife and newborn son, and read. (The son was Malcolm, a name in the Scottish "Melvill" family but also, everyone recognized, the young man who at the end of *Macbeth* is hailed as the king of Scotland.) The book he wrote in the year and a half after reaching home at the beginning of February 1850 would be pervasively influenced by Shakespeare's plays (where King Lear and other tragic heroes provided models for Ahab's rhetoric). It would also be pervasively influenced by the Bible (in particular the book of Job, which provided an analogue for Ahab's quarrel with God, and the book of Jonah, which provided an analogue for Ishmael's less defiant method of coming to terms with the universe). Melville had never stopped reading the Bible, usually in the King James Version, and the language of *Moby-Dick* is suffused with echoes of the long-familiar Bible and the freshly absorbed (or reabsorbed) Shakespeare. The Bible and Shakespeare shaped the language and psychology of *Moby-Dick* as decisively as J. N. Reynolds and Owen Chase shaped the plot.

Other nonnautical works (including classics of English literature, along with some European classics, in translation) may be listed in the order in which Melville encountered them, or reencountered them, before beginning *Moby-Dick* (taking evidence of purchase or borrowing as a rough guide, and only that, to the sequence in which he read or reread them). The presiding genius of his brooding adolescence was Lord Byron (son of a Scottish mother). Byron's self-portraits in the heroes of his book-length poems like *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* and *Manfred* decisively influenced the characterization of Bulkington, so important, it seems, in Melville's early concept of his whaling book. Sir Walter Scott exerted a powerful influence over the imagination of all young readers in Melville's youth first by his immensely popular poetry, then by novels that transformed the scope and historical seriousness fiction might aim at. For Melville, who followed his own short career as prose writer with a long second career as poet, Scott showed what being a complete literary man might be. Furthermore, Scott was blessedly Scottish, like the Melvills (the final "e" was added only in Melville's youth); Melville's father once called on his not distant cousin, the Earl of Leven and Melvill. The subject of Scott's importance to Melville (initially through his brother Gansevoort) awaits the attention of a scholar equally knowledgeable in both writers; Melville's familiarity with Scott appears casually in *Moby-Dick* (Ch. 72, "The Monkey-rope").

Beginning in 1847, Robert Burton's *Anatomy of Melancholy* served as Melville's sonorous textbook on morbid psychology. Early in 1848 he bought Michel de Montaigne's works, where he read the *Essays*, finding there a

worldly wise skepticism that braced him against the superficial pieties demanded by his time. From his friend Evert Duyckinck early in 1848 Melville borrowed Sir Thomas Browne's *Religio Medici*, then astonished the lender by calling Browne "a kind of 'crack'd Archangel.'" ("Was ever any thing of this sort said before by a sailor?" Duyckinck wrote his brother George.) Melville absorbed the seductive prose rhythms that Browne had put to the service of a dumbfoundingly self-possessed idiosyncrasy; in London late in 1849 he bought the 1686 folio of Browne's works, where he read *Vulgar Errors*, alluded to in *Moby-Dick*. In mid-1848 he obtained a copy of Dante's *Divine Comedy* where he found an anatomy of human sinfulness. Inspired by the accessibility of what he considered a large-type Shakespeare early in 1849, he sought out an edition of Milton by the same publisher in a similar format and soon was rereading *Paradise Lost* (from which he derived some of Ahab's qualities as Satanic opponent). A little later in 1849 he obtained Pierre Bayle's *An Historical and Critical Dictionary* in four folio volumes, rejoicing in the blandly ironic Enlightenment skepticism toward lives of historical and literary people and toward philosophical questions.

In London in December 1849 Melville bought and read Laurence Sterne's *Tristram Shandy*, reveling in its liberating gamesomeness toward the lofty task of bookmaking. A few days later he devoured Thomas De Quincey's *Confessions of an English Opium Eater* ("A wonderful thing, that book," he wrote in his journal). He found there a Malay whose Asiatic associations he soon infused into Fedallah and his boat's crew and found also an apparently inimitable prose style that to Melville was as natural as his own voice. In London late in 1849 he bought Christopher Marlowe's *Dramatic Works* and soon read at least *Doctor Faustus*. Well before he began *Moby-Dick* he knew Goethe's *Faust* (where, as in *Doctor Faustus*, he found analogues of demonic temptation and heroic obsession). In London he bought Goethe's *Auto-Biography*, the account of a philosophical and artistic life that he had to hold up against Lord Byron's as he weighed his relationships to the two men who loomed as the great European writers of his era. In Thomas Hope's *Anastasius; or, Memoirs of a Greek*, which he bought twice on his European trip late in 1849 (the first copy seized by the English customs officers at Dover as obscene), he found hints for his character Ishmael's twists of mind and actions, not least a ceremonial marriage between men. In London he obtained Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* (which may have influenced Ahab's prolonged revenge pursuit). In London he bought Coleridge's lectures on Shakespeare, finding in the one on *Hamlet* the definition of the Shakespearean hero that he worked into Ch. 16, "The Ship."

In mid-1850 Melville borrowed Thomas Carlyle's *Sartor Resartus* and *Heroes and Hero-Worship*, finding a congenial rhetoric, an appealing sardonic verbal playfulness, a compelling depiction of the physical universe as emblematical, and an incisive analysis of Oliver Cromwell from which he took hints for his tyrannical captain. Before he finished *Moby-Dick*, he encountered in the London *Quarterly Review* for July 1823 an anonymous article (by Sir Francis Palgrave), "Superstition and Knowledge," which so impressed him that he made notes on it—rather oddly, in his Shakespeare, so that modern scholars long took it for granted that they were closely connected with Shakespeare in his mind. This article in the *Quarterly Review* gave Melville the formula he used in writing to

Hawthorne about the book's baptism (see p. 570) and in the long run clarified for Melville his own vulnerable position of a writer pursued by fanatical witch-hunters, successors of "the man of the [New York] *Evangelist*" who had damned *Typee* as immoral more for its suggestiveness than what it directly expressed. Such a list of works, even cursorily annotated, has the virtue of emphasizing what should be kept obvious—that in Melville's resolve "to give the world a book, which the world should hail with surprise and delight" (words already ironic, because of the failure of *Moby-Dick*, when he wrote them into *Pierre* early in 1852), his wondrous book would itself be the original product of the assimilation of many other books.

Works that appear in our footnotes to *Moby-Dick* without full citations are listed here, in alphabetical order, works of high literature mixed higgledy-piggledy with nautical works (J. Ross Browne cheek-by-jowl with Sir Thomas Browne, in true Melvillean fashion) along with Melville's dictionaries and encyclopedias (whenever possible, in the editions Melville used), and a few modern books such as Stuart Frank's *Herman Melville's Picture Gallery*, which contains reproductions of many of the works of art and artifacts mentioned in *Moby-Dick*. Full titles are used, not only because such titles are richly evocative still, as they were to Melville, but also because they concisely provide specific information about their contents and the larger geographical and economic contexts.

Detailed information about Melville's books is in Merton M. Sealts Jr., *Melville's Reading: Revised and Enlarged Edition* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1988); one important whaling book, the Bennett, is listed by Sealts in "A Third Supplementary Note to *Melville's Reading* (1988)," *Melville Society Extracts*, 112 (March 1998): 12–14. (Steven Olsen-Smith was charged by Sealts, who died in 2000, with keeping *Melville's Reading* updated and has become one of the editors of *Melville's Marginalia*, online.) Still more information is in Mary K. Bercaw, *Melville's Sources* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1987). Sealts lists books only that can be shown to have been in Melville's hands, books he owned or borrowed or is known to have seen. Bercaw, by contrast, lists not only books that Melville is known to have held but books that evidence in his writings shows that he *must* have held. Sealts does not list Amasa Delano's *Voyages*, the main source for *Benito Cereno*, because a copy cannot be tied to Melville by purchase or borrowing; Bercaw does list the book, for (as Sealts knew, of course) Melville plainly had a copy of it. Both Sealts and Bercaw are essential for study of Melville's sources, as is *Melville's Marginalia* (online).

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Bennett, Frederick Debell. *Narrative of a Whaling Voyage round the Globe, from the Year 1833 to 1836. Comprising Sketches of Polynesia, California, the Indian Archipelago, etc., with an Account of Southern Whales, the Sperm Whale Fishery, and the Natural History of the Climates Visited*. London: Bentley, 1840.

Browne, J. Ross. *Etchings of a Whaling Cruise, with Notes of a Sojourn on the Island of Zanzibar. To Which Is Appended a Brief History of the Whale Fishery.* New York: Harper, 1846.

Browne, Sir Thomas. *Religio Medici* (A Doctor's Religion; 1642, 1643) and *Pseudodoxia Epidemica* (Vulgar Errors; 1646) in *Works, Including His Life and Correspondence*. London: Pickering, 1835–36. Also in *The Works . . . with Alphabetical Tables.* London: Basset, 1686.

Bunyan, John. *The Pilgrim's Progress, from this World to that which is to come*. Edition unknown. (A copy of the book that had belonged to Melville was apparently destroyed in the New England hurricane of 1938.)

Burton, Robert. *Anatomy of Melancholy; as It Proceeds from the Disposition and Habit, the Passion of Love, and the Influence of Religion.* London: Vernor & Hood, 1801. (Melville bought this book in the 1840s not realizing that it had once belonged to his father; he also owned the 1847 Wiley edition.)

Byron, George Gordon Noel, 6th Baron. *Don Juan*, *Dramas*, *Miscellanies*, and *Tales.* London: Murray, 1837. (In July 1847, the month before her wedding, Elizabeth Shaw Melville was given this volume. Probably individual book-length poems [besides *Don Juan*] were in the house, perhaps the copy of *The Bride of Abydos* that Gansevoort Melville read in 1834, and very likely *Manfred*, but the known *Poetical Works* from Melville's library is an edition published after *Moby-Dick*.)

Byron, John. *The Narrative of the Honourable John Byron . . . Containing an Account of the Great Distresses Suffered by Himself and His Companions on the Coast of Patagonia, from the Year 1740, till Their Arrival in England, 1746. With a Description of St. Jago de Chili, and the Manners and Customs of the Inhabitants. Also a Relation of the Loss of the Wager, Man of War, One of Admiral Anson's Squadron*. London: Baker & Leigh, 1768.

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Cervantes Saavedra, Miguel de. *Don Quixote*. 1605, 1615. Edition unknown.

Chase, Owen. *Narrative of the Most Extraordinary and Distressing Shipwreck of the Whale-Ship Essex, of Nantucket; Which Was Attacked and Finally Destroyed by a Large Spermaceti-Whale in the Pacific Ocean; with an Account of the Unparalleled Sufferings of the Captain and Crew.* New York: Gilley, 1821.

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Cook, Captain James A. *A Voyage to the Pacific for Making Discoveries in the Northern Hemisphere (1776–1780)*. London, 1785.
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Dante Alighieri. *The Vision; or Hell, Purgatory, and Paradise*. Trans. Cary. London: Henry G. Bohn, 1847.
De Quincey, Thomas. *Confessions of an English Opium Eater*. London: Taylor & Hessey, 1822.
D'Wolf, John. *A Voyage to the North Pacific and a Journey through Siberia More than Half a Century Ago*. Boston: Welch & Bigelow, 1861. Reprinted Bristol, RI: Rulon-Miller Books, 1983. (Melville had heard many stories from D'Wolf, his uncle, before writing *Moby-Dick*.)
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J. N. REYNOLDS

Mocha Dick: Or the White Whale of the Pacific: A Leaf from a Manuscript Journal†

We expected to find the island of Santa Maria still more remarkable for the luxuriance of its vegetation, than even the fertile soil of Mocha; and the disappointment arising from the unexpected shortness of our stay at the latter place, was in some degree relieved, by the prospect of our remaining for several days in safe anchorage at the former. Mocha lies upon the coast of Chili, in lat. 38° 28′ south, twenty leagues north of Mono del Bonifacio, and opposite the Imperial river, from which it bears w. s. w. During the last century, this island was inhabited by the Spaniards, but it is at present, and has been for some years, entirely deserted. Its climate is mild, with little perceptible difference of temperature between the summer and winter seasons. Frost is unknown on the lowlands, and snow is rarely seen, even on the summits of the loftiest mountains.

It was late in the afternoon, when we left the schooner; and while we bore up for the north, she stood away for the southern extremity of the

† From "Mocha Dick," *The Knickerbocker, or New York Monthly Magazine* XIII (May 1839): 377–92. Unless otherwise indicated, notes are the editor's. Jeremiah N. Reynolds (1799–1858) was a lecturer on the hollow earth theory. He wrote *Voyage of the United States Frigate Potomac* (Harper, 1835), which contains a great deal of information about American whaling in the Pacific, and was a chief instigator of the great U.S. Exploring Expedition of 1838–42. His article "Mocha Dick" was published in the *Knickerbocker Magazine* for May 1839; copies were available in New York City on the first and in Albany a day or so later. The article was reprinted in the Albany *Evening Journal* for June 6, 1839, where normally Herman Melville would have seen it, but he had signed on the *St. Lawrence*, a trade ship bound for Liverpool, three days earlier. He had arrived in New York thinking of signing on a whaler. Around June 2 his brother Gansevoort plotted out the distances between New York and two whaling ports on Long Island, Sag Harbor (109 miles away by the "lower road") and River Head (81 miles away by the "middle road"). This was not surprising: their cousin Thomas Melvill had sailed on a whale ship earlier that year. However, this does demonstrate that Melville began contemplating going on a whaler over a year and a half prior to his departure. The brothers choose an Atlantic trader over a whaler, but in their plans Melville may have been stirred by "Mocha Dick," which he could have seen in Albany in the month of May. He could have seen it at any time in the year after his return before he signed on the *Acushnet*.

"Mocha Dick: Or The White Whale of the Pacific" was reprinted around the country in May, June, and July, sometimes serialized, sometimes put into one issue of a newspaper. The Raleigh, North Carolina, *Star*, a Whig paper, on June 12, 1839, declared that the Democrats ought to concede all elections before voting, but might not: "Instead of pursuing this prudent course, he may, for a time, keep up the appearance of a struggle, and, whale-like, by his 'flurry' lash into a bloody foam the waves of the political ocean; but the harpoons of the Whigs have gone too far into his 'blubber,' and soon he must lie upon the waters a lifeless mass, with the Whig flag of capture floating triumphantly above him—a veritable political 'Mocha Dick.'" This shows that readers began to apply Mocha Dick imaginatively, as readers later came to apply Melville's Moby Dick. It has not been proven that Melville ever read "Mocha Dick," but his best work came when he was incited by masterful writers.

island. As evening was gathering around us, we fell in with a vessel, which proved to be the same whose boats, a day or two before, we had seen in the act of taking a whale. Aside from the romantic and stirring associations it awakened, there are few objects in themselves more picturesque or beautiful, than a whale-ship, seen from a distance of three or four miles, on a pleasant evening, in the midst of the great Pacific. As she moves gracefully over the water, rising and falling on the gentle undulations peculiar to this sea; her sails glowing in the quivering light of the fires that flash from below, and a thick volume of smoke ascending from the midst, and curling away in dark masses upon the wind; it requires little effort of the fancy, to imagine one's self gazing upon a floating volcano.

As we were both standing to the north, under easy sail, at nine o'clock at night we had joined company with the stranger. Soon after, we were boarded by his whale-boat, the officer in command of which bore us the compliments of the captain, together with a friendly invitation to partake the hospitalities of his cabin. Accepting, without hesitation, a courtesy so frankly tendered, we proceeded, in company with Captain Palmer, on board, attended by the mate of the Penguin, who was on his way to St. Mary's to repair his boat, which had some weeks before been materially injured in a storm.

We found the whaler a large, well-appointed ship, owned in New-York, and commanded by such a man as one might expect to find in charge of a vessel of this character; plain, unassuming, intelligent, and well-informed upon all the subjects relating to his peculiar calling. But what shall we say of his first mate, or how describe him? To attempt his portrait by a comparison, would be vain, for we have never looked upon his like; and a detailed description, however accurate, would but faintly shadow forth the *tout ensemble* of his extraordinary figure. He had probably numbered about thirty-five years. We arrived at this conclusion, however, rather from the untamed brightness of his flashing eye, than the general appearance of his features, on which torrid sun and polar storm had left at once the furrows of more advanced age, and a tint swarthy as that of the Indian. His height, which was a little beneath the common standard, appeared almost dwarfish, from the immense breadth of his overhanging shoulders; while the unnatural length of the loose, dangling arms which hung from them, and which, when at rest, had least the appearance of ease, imparted to his uncouth and muscular frame an air of grotesque awkwardness, which defies description. He made few pretensions as a sailor, and had never aspired to the command of a ship. But he would not have exchanged the sensations which stirred his blood, when steering down upon a school of whales, for the privilege of treading, as master, the deck of the noblest liner that ever traversed the Atlantic. According to the admeasurement of his philosophy, whaling was the most dignified and manly of all sublunary pursuits. Of this he felt perfectly satisfied, having been engaged in the noble vocation for upward of twenty years, during which period, if his own assertions were to be received as evidence, no man in the American spermaceti fleet had made so many captures, or met with such wild adventures, in the exercise of his perilous profession. Indeed, so completely were all his propensities, thoughts, and feelings, identified with his occupation; so intimately did he seem acquainted with the habits and instincts of the objects of his pursuit, and so little conversant with the ordinary affairs of

life; that one felt less inclined to class him in the genus *homo*, than as a sort of intermediate something between man and the cetaceous tribe.

Soon after the commencement of his nautical career, in order to prove that he was not afraid of a whale, a point which it is essential for the young whaleman to establish beyond question, he offered, upon a wager, to run his boat 'bows on' against the side of an 'old bull,' leap from the 'cuddy' to the back of the fish, sheet his lance home, and return on board in safety. This feat, daring as it may be considered, he undertook and accomplished; at least so it was chronicled in his log, and he was ready to bear witness, on oath, to the veracity of the record. But his conquest of the redoubtable Mocha Dick, unquestionably formed the climax of his exploits.

Before we enter into the particulars of this triumph, which, through their valorous representative, conferred so much honor on the lancers of Nantucket, it may be proper to inform the reader who and what Mocha Dick was; and thus give him a posthumous introduction to one who was, in his day and generation, so emphatically among fish the 'Stout Gentleman' of his latitudes. The introductory portion of his history we shall give, in a condensed form, from the relation of the mate. Substantially, however, it will be even as he rendered it; and as his subsequent narrative, though not deficient in rude eloquence, was coarse in style and language, as well as unnecessarily diffuse, we shall assume the liberty of altering the expression; of adapting the phraseology to the occasion; and of presenting the whole matter in a shape more succinct and connected. In this arrangement, however, we shall leave our adventurer to tell his *own story*, although not always in his own words, and shall preserve the person of the original.

But to return to Mocha Dick—which, it may be observed, few were solicitous to do, who had once escaped from him. This renowned monster, who had come off victorious in a hundred fights with his pursuers, was an old bull whale, of prodigious size and strength. From the effect of age, or more probably from a freak of nature, as exhibited in the case of the Ethiopian Albino, a singular consequence had resulted—*he was white as wool!* Instead of projecting his spout obliquely forward, and puffing with a short, convulsive effort, accompanied by a snorting noise, as usual with his species, he flung the water from his nose in a lofty, perpendicular, expanded volume, at regular and somewhat distant intervals; its expulsion producing a continuous roar, like that of vapor struggling from the safety-valve of a powerful steam engine. Viewed from a distance, the practised eye of the sailor only could decide, that the moving mass, which constituted this enormous animal, was not a white cloud sailing along the horizon. On the spermaceti whale, barnacles are rarely discovered; but upon the head of this *lusus naturæ*, they had clustered, until it became absolutely rugged with the shells. In short, regard him as you would, he was a most extraordinary fish; or, in the vernacular of Nantucket, 'a genuine old sog,' of the first water.

Opinions differ as to the time of his discovery. It is settled, however, that previous to the year 1810, he had been seen and attacked near the island of Mocha. Numerous boats are known to have been shattered by his immense flukes, or ground to pieces in the crush of his powerful jaws; and, on one occasion, it is said that he came off victorious from a conflict with the crews of three English whalers, striking fiercely at the last of the retreating boats, at the moment it was rising from the water, in its hoist up to the ship's davits. It must not be supposed, howbeit, that through all this desperate warfare, our leviathan passed scathless. A back serried with

irons, and from fifty to a hundred yards of line trailing in his wake, sufficiently attested, that though unconquered, he had not proved invulnerable.[1] From the period of Dick's first appearance, his celebrity continued to increase, until his name seemed naturally to mingle with the salutations which whalemen were in the habit of exchanging, in their encounters upon the broad Pacific; the customary interrogatories almost always closing with, 'Any news from Mocha Dick?' Indeed, nearly every whaling captain who rounded Cape Horn, if he possessed any professional ambition, or valued himself on his skill in subduing the monarch of the seas, would lay his vessel along the coast, in the hope of having an opportunity to try the muscle of this doughty champion, who was never known to shun his assailants. It was remarked, nevertheless, that the old fellow seemed particularly careful as to the portion of his body which he exposed to the approach of the boat-steerer; generally presenting, by some well-timed manœuvre, his back to the harpooner; and dexterously evading every attempt to plant an iron under his fin, or a spade on his 'small'. Though naturally fierce, it was not customary with Dick, while unmolested, to betray a malicious disposition. On the contrary, he would sometimes pass quietly round a vessel, and occasionally swim lazily and harmlessly among the boats, when armed with full craft, for the destruction of his race. But this forbearance gained him little credit, for if no other cause of accusation remained to them, his foes would swear they saw a lurking deviltry in the long, careless sweep of his flukes. Be this as it may, nothing is more certain, than that all indifference vanished with the first prick of the harpoon; while cutting the line, and a hasty retreat to their vessel, were frequently the only means of escape from destruction, left to his discomfited assaulters.

Thus far the whaleman had proceeded in his story, and was about commencing the relation of his own individual encounters with its subject, when he was cut short by the mate of the Penguin, to whom allusion has already been made, and who had remained, up to this point, an excited and attentive listener. Thus he would have continued, doubtless, to the end of the chapter, notwithstanding his avowed contempt for every other occupation than sealing, had not an observation escaped the narrator, which tended to arouse his professional jealousy. The obnoxious expression we have forgotten. Probably it involved something of boasting or egotism; for no sooner was it uttered, than our sealer sprang from his seat, and planting himself in front of the unconscious author of the insult, exclaimed:

'*You!*—you whale-killing, blubber-hunting, light-gathering varmint!—*you* pretend to manage a boat better than a Stonington sealer! A Nantucket whaleman,' he continued, curling his lip with a smile of supreme disdain, 'presume to teach a Stonington sealer how to manage a boat! Let all the small craft of your South Sea fleet range among the rocks and breakers where I have been, and if the whales would not have a peaceful time of it, for the next few years, may I never strip another jacket, or book another skin! What's taking a whale? Why, I could reeve a line through one's blow-hole, make it fast to a thwart, and then beat his brains out with my seal-club!'

1. The Alexandria *Gazette* on May 7, 1839, said this: "one of the most spirited things in the number is a sea sketch, by J. N. Reynolds, Esq., giving an account of the capture of an old white whale of the Pacific, called 'Mocha Dick,' a huge monster, white as snow, his head covered with barnacles and his back serried with rusted harpoons, their lines, streaming like 'horrid hair' in his wake." The allusion is to *Paradise Lost* 2.700–701, where the unterrified Satan from his "horrid hair / Shakes Pestilence and War."

Having thus given play to the first ebullition of his choler, he proceeded with more calmness to institute a comparison between whaling and sealing. 'A whaler,' said he, 'never approaches land, save when he enters a port to seek fresh grub. Not so the sealer. *He* thinks that his best fortune, which leads him where the form of man has never before startled the game he's after; where a quick eye, steady nerve, and stout heart, are his only guide and defence, in difficulty and danger. Where the sea is roughest, the whirlpool wildest, and the surf roars and dashes madly among the jagged cliffs, there—I was going to say there *only*—are the peak-nosed, black-eyed rogues we hunt for, to be found, gambolling in the white foam, and there must the sealer follow them. Were I to give you an account of my adventures about the Falkland Isles; off the East Keys of Staten Land; through the South Shetlands; off the Cape, where we lived on salt pork and seal's flippers; and finally, the story of a season spent with a single boat's crew on Diego Ramirez,[2] you would not make such a fuss about your Mocha Dick. As to the straits of Magellen, Sir, they are as familiar to me, as Broadway to a New-York dandy; though *it* should strut along that fashionable promenade twelve dozen times a day.'

Our son of the sea would have gone on to particularize his 'hair-breadth 'scapes and moving accidents,'[3] had we not interposed, and insisted that the remainder of the night should be devoted to the conclusion of Dick's history; at the same time assuring the 'knight of the club' that so soon as we met at Santa Maria, he should have an entire evening expressly set apart, on which he might glorify himself and his calling. To this he assented, with the qualification, that his compliance with the general wish, in thus yielding precedence to his rival, should not be construed into an admission, that Nantucket whalemen were the best boatmen in the world, or that sealing was not as honorable and as pretty a business for coining a penny, as the profession of 'blubber-hunting' ever was.

The whaler now resumed. 'I will not weary you,' said he, 'with the uninteresting particulars of a voyage to Cape Horn. Our vessel, as capital a ship as ever left the little island of Nantucket, was finely manned and commanded, as well as thoroughly provided with every requisite for the peculiar service in which she was engaged. I may here observe, for the information of such among you as are not familiar with these things, that soon after a whale-ship from the United States is fairly at sea, the men are summoned aft; then boats' crews are selected by the captain and first mate, and a ship-keeper at the same time, is usually chosen. The place to be filled by this individual is an important one; and the person designated should be a careful and sagacious man. His duty is, more particularly, to superintend the vessel while the boats are away, in chase of fish; and at these times, the cook and steward are perhaps his only crew. His station, on these occasions, is at the mast-head, except when he is wanted below, to assist in working the ship. While aloft, he is to look out for whales, and also to keep a strict and tireless eye upon the absentees, in order to render them immediate assistance, should emergency require it. Should the game rise to windward of their pursuers, and they be too distant to observe personal

2. Diego Ramirez is a small island, lying s.w. from Cape Horn. [Reynolds's note.]
3. Shakespeare's *Othello* 1.3.136, from the Moor's account of how he won Desdemona's love by his stories. Below, the knight is the seal-hunter, who kills his prey with a club (from the jocular way of referring to policemen with their truncheons as "knights of the club").

signs, he must run down the jib. If they rise to leeward, he should haul up the spanker; continuing the little black signal-flag at the mast, so long as they remain on the surface. When the 'school' turn flukes, and go down, the flag is to be struck, and again displayed when they are seen to ascend. When circumstances occur which require the return of the captain on board, the colors are to be hoisted at the mizzen peak. A ship-keeper must farther be sure that provisions are ready for the men, on their return from the chase, and that drink be amply furnished, in the form of a bucket of 'switchel.' 'No whale, no switchel,' is frequently the rule; but I am inclined to think that, whale or no whale, a little rum is not amiss, after a lusty pull.

'I have already said, that little of interest occurred, until after we had doubled Cape Horn. We were now standing in upon the coast of Chili, before a gentle breeze from the south, that bore us along almost imperceptibly. It was a quiet and beautiful evening, and the sea glanced and glistened in the level rays of the descending sun, with a surface of waving gold. The western sky was flooded with amber light, in the midst of which, like so many islands, floated immense clouds, of every conceivable brilliant dye; while far to the northeast, looming darkly against a paler heaven, rose the conical peak of Mocha. The men were busily employed in sharpening their harpoons, spades, and lances, for the expected fight. The look-out at the mast-head, with cheek on his shoulder, was dreaming of the 'dangers he had passed,'[4] instead of keeping watch for those which were to come; while the captain paced the quarter-deck with long and hasty stride, scanning the ocean in every direction, with a keen, expectant eye. All at once, he stopped, fixed his gaze intently for an instant on some object to leeward, that seemed to attract it, and then, in no very conciliating tone, hailed the mast-head:

''Both ports shut?' he exclaimed, looking aloft, and pointing backward, where a long white bushy spout was rising, about a mile off the larboard bow, against the glowing horizon. 'Both ports shut? I say, you leaden-eyed lubber! Nice lazy son of a sea-cook *you* are, for a look-out! Come down, Sir!'

''There she blows!—sperm whale—old sog, sir;' said the man, in a deprecatory tone, as he descended from his nest in the air. It was at once seen that the creature was companionless; but as a lone whale is generally an old bull, and of unusual size and ferocity, more than ordinary sport was anticipated, while unquestionably more than ordinary honor was to be won from its successful issue.

'The second mate and I were ordered to make ready for pursuit; and now commenced a scene of emulation and excitement, of which the most vivid description would convey but an imperfect outline, unless you have been a spectator or an actor on a similar occasion. Line-tubs, water-kegs, and wafe-poles, were thrown hurriedly into the boats; the irons were placed in the racks, and the necessary evolutions of the ship gone through, with a quickness almost magical; and this too, amidst what to a landsman would have seemed inextricable confusion, with perfect regularity and precision; the commands of the officers being all but forestalled by the enthusiastic eagerness of the men. In a short time, we were as near the object of our chase, as it was considered prudent to approach.

4. *Othello*, 1.3.167.

''Back the main-top-s'l!' shouted the captain. 'There she blows! there she blows!—there she blows!'—cried the look-out, who had taken the place of his sleepy shipmate, raising the pitch of his voice with each announcement, until it amounted to a downright yell. 'Right ahead, Sir!—spout as long an 's thick as the mainyard!'

''Stand by to lower!' exclaimed the captain; 'all hands; cook, steward, cooper—every d—d one of ye, stand by to lower!'

'An instantaneous rush from all quarters of the vessel answered this appeal, and every man was at his station, almost before the last word had passed the lips of the skipper.

''Lower away!'—and in a moment the keels splashed in the water. 'Follow down the crews; jump in my boys; ship the crotch; line your oars; now pull, as if the d—l was in your wake!' were the successive orders, as the men slipped down the ship's side, took their places in the boats, and began to give way.

'The second mate had a little the advantage of me in starting. The stern of his boat grated against the bows of mine, at the instant I grasped my steering-oar, and gave the word to shove off. One sweep of my arm, and we sprang foaming in his track. Now came the tug of war. To become a first-rate oarsman, you must understand, requires a natural gift. My crew were not wanting in the proper qualification; every mother's son of them pulled as if he had been born with an oar in his hand; and as they stretched every sinew for the glory of darting the first iron it did my heart good to see the boys spring. At every stroke, the tough blades bent like willow wands, and quivered like tempered steel in the warm sunlight, as they sprang forward from the tension of the retreating wave. At the distance of half a mile, and directly before us, lay the object of our emulation and ambition, heaving his huge bulk in unwieldly gambols, as though totally unconscious of our approach.

''There he blows! An old bull, by Jupiter! Eighty barrels, boys, waiting to be towed alongside! Long and quick—shoot ahead! Now she feels it; waist-boat never could beat us; now she feels the touch!—now she walks through it! Again—*now!*' Such were the broken exclamations and adjurations with which I cheered my rowers to their toil, as, with renewed vigor, I plied my long steering-oar. In another moment, we were alongside our competitor. The shivering blades flashed forward and backward, like sparks of light. The waters boiled under our prow, and the trenched waves closed, hissing and whirling, in our wake, as we swept, I might almost say were *lifted*, onward in our arrowy course.

'We were coming down upon our fish, and could hear the roar of his spouting above the rush of the sea, when my boat began to take the lead.

''Now, my fine fellows,' I exclaimed, in triumph, 'now we'll show them our stern—only spring! Stand ready, harpooner, but do n't dart, till I give the word.'

''Carry me on, and his name 's *Dennis!*'[5] cried the boat-steerer, in a confident tone. We were perhaps a hundred feet in advance of the waist-boat, and within fifty of the whale, about an inch of whose hump only was to be seen above the water, when, heaving slowly into view a pair of flukes some eighteen feet in width, he went down. The men lay on their oars. 'There

5. "A whale's name is Dennis, when he spouts blood" [Reynolds's note].

he blows, again!' cried the tub-oarsman, as a lofty, perpendicular spout sprang into the air, a few furlongs away on the starboard side. Presuming from his previous movement, that the old fellow had been 'gallied' by other boats, and might probably be jealous of our purpose, I was about ordering the men to pull away as softly and silently as possible, when we received fearful intimation that he had no intention of balking our inclination, or even yielding us the honor of the first attack. Lashing the sea with his enormous tail, until he threw about him a cloud of surf and spray, he came down, at full speed, 'jaws on,' with the determination, apparently, of doing battle in earnest. As he drew near, with his long curved back looming occasionally above the surface of the billows, we perceived that it was *white as the surf around him;* and the men stared aghast at each other, as they uttered, in a suppressed tone, the terrible name of Mocha Dick!

''Mocha Dick or the d—l,' said I, 'this boat never sheers off from any thing that wears the shape of a whale. Pull easy; just give her way enough to steer.' As the creature approached, he somewhat abated his frenzied speed, and, at the distance of a cable's length, changed his course to a sharp angle with our own.

''Here he comes!' I exclaimed. 'Stand up, harpooner! Do n't be hasty—do n't be flurried. Hold your iron higher—firmer. Now!' I shouted, as I brought our bows within a boat's length of the immense mass which was wallowing heavily by. *'Now!—give it to him solid!'*

'But the leviathan plunged on, unharmed. The young harpooner, though ordinarily as fearless as a lion, had imbibed a sort of superstitious dread of Mocha Dick, from the exaggerated stories of that prodigy, which he had heard from his comrades. He regarded him, as he had heard him described in many a tough yarn during the middle watch, rather as some ferocious fiend of the deep, than a regular-built, legitimate whale! Judge then of his trepidation, on beholding a creature, answering the wildest dreams of his fancy, and sufficiently formidable, without any superadded terrors, bearing down upon him with thrashing flukes and distended jaws! He stood erect, it cannot be denied. He planted his foot—he grasped the coil—he poised his weapon. But his knee shook, and his sinewy arm wavered. The shaft was hurled, but with unsteady aim. It just grazed the back of the monster, glanced off, and darted into the sea beyond. A second, still more abortive, fell short of the mark. The giant animal swept on for a few rods, and then, as if in contempt of our fruitless and childish attempt to injure him, flapped a storm of spray in our faces with his broad tail, and dashed far down into the depths of the ocean, leaving our little skiff among the waters where he sank, to spin and duck in the whirlpool.

'Never shall I forget the choking sensation of disappointment which came over me at that moment. My glance fell on the harpooner. 'Clumsy lubber!' I vociferated, in a voice hoarse with passion; '*you* a whaleman! You are only fit to spear eels! Cowardly spawn! Curse me, if you are not *afraid* of a whale!'

'The poor fellow, mortified at his failure, was slowly and thoughtfully hauling in his irons. No sooner had he heard me stigmatize him as 'afraid of a whale,' than he bounded upon his thwart, as if bitten by a serpent. He stood before me for a moment, with a glowing cheek and flashing eye; then, dropping the iron he had just drawn in, without uttering a word, he turned half round, and sprang head-foremost into the sea. The tub-oarsman, who was re-coiling the line in the after part of the boat,

saw his design just in season to grasp him by the heel, as he made his spring. But he was not to be dragged on board again without a struggle. Having now become more calm, I endeavored to soothe his wounded pride with kind and flattering words; for I knew him to be a noble-hearted fellow, and was truly sorry that my hasty reproaches should have touched so fine a spirit so deeply.

'Night being now at hand, the captain's signal was set for our return to the vessel; and we were soon assembled on her deck, discussing the mischances of the day, and speculating on the prospect of better luck on the morrow.

'We were at breakfast next morning, when the watch at the fore-top-gallant head sung out merrily, 'There she breaches!' In an instant every one was on his feet. 'Where away?' cried the skipper, rushing from the cabin, and upsetting in his course the steward, who was returning from the caboose with a replenished biggin of hot coffee. 'Not loud but deep'[6] were the grumblings and groans of that functionary, as he rubbed his scalded shins, and danced about in agony; but had they been far louder, they would have been drowned in the tumult of vociferation which answered the announcement from the mast-head.

''Where away?' repeated the captain, as he gained the deck.

''Three points off the leeward bow.'

''How far?'

''About a league, Sir; heads same as we do. There she blows!' added the man, as he came slowly down the shrouds, with his eyes fixed intently upon the spouting herd.

''Keep her off two points! Steady!—steady, as she goes!'

''Steady it is, Sir,' answered the helmsman.

''Weather braces, a small pull. Loose to'-gallant-s'ls! Bear a hand, my boys! Who knows but we may tickle their ribs at this rising?'

'The captain had gone aloft, and was giving these orders from the main-to'-gallant-cross-trees. 'There she top-tails! there she blows!' added he, as, after taking a long look at the sporting shoal, he glided down the back stay. 'Sperm whale, and a thundering big school of 'em!' was his reply to the rapid and eager inquiries of the men. 'See the lines in the boats,' he continued; 'get in the craft; swing the cranes!'

'By this time the fish had gone down, and every eye was strained to catch the first intimation of their reappearance.

''There she *spouts!*' screamed a young greenhorn in the main chains, 'close by; a mighty big whale, Sir!'

''We'll know that better at the trying out, my son,' said the third mate, drily.

''Back the main-top-s'l!' was now the command. The ship had little headway at the time, and in a few minutes we were as motionless as if lying at anchor.

''Lower away, all hands!' And in a twinkling, and together, the starboard, larboard, and waist-boats struck the water. Each officer leaped into his own; the crews arranged themselves at their respective stations; the boat-steerers began to adjust their 'craft;' and we left the ship's side in company; the captain, in laconic phrase, bidding us to 'get up and get fast,' as quickly as possible.

6. *Macbeth*, 5.3.27.

'Away we dashed, in the direction of our prey, who were frolicking, if such a term can be applied to their unwieldly motions, on the surface of the waves. Occasionally, a huge, shapeless body would flounce out of its proper element, and fall back with a heavy splash; the effort forming about as ludicrous a caricature of agility, as would the attempt of some over-fed alderman to execute the Highland fling.

'We were within a hundred rods of the herd, when, as if from a common impulse, or upon some preconcerted signal, they all suddenly disappeared. 'Follow me!' I shouted, waving my hand to the men in the other boats; 'I see their track under water; they swim fast, but we'll be among them when they rise. Lay back,' I continued, addressing myself to my own crew, 'back to the thwarts! Spring *hard!* We'll be in the thick of 'em when they come up; only *pull!*'

'And they did pull, manfully. After rowing for about a mile, I ordered them to 'lie.' The oars were peaked, and we rose to look out for the first 'noddle-head' that should break water. It was at this time a dead calm. Not a single cloud was passing over the deep blue of the heavens, to vary their boundless transparency, or shadow for a moment the gleaming ocean which they spanned. Within a short distance lay our noble ship, with her idle canvass hanging in drooping festoons from her yards; while she seemed resting on her inverted image, which, distinct and beautiful as its original, was glassed in the smooth expanse beneath. No sound disturbed the general silence, save our own heavy breathings, the low gurgle of the water against the side of the boat, or the noise of flapping wings, as the albatross wheeled sleepily along through the stagnant atmosphere. We had remained quiet for about five minutes, when some dark object was descried ahead, moving on the surface of the sea. It proved to be a small 'calf,' playing in the sunshine.

''Pull up and strike it,' said I to the third mate; 'it may bring up the old one—perhaps the whole school.'

'And so it did, with a vengeance! The sucker was transpierced, after a short pursuit; but hardly had it made its first agonized plunge, when an enormous cow-whale rose close beside her wounded offspring. Her first endeavor was to take it under her fin, in order to bear it away; and nothing could be more striking than the maternal tenderness she manifested in her exertions to accomplish this object. But the poor thing was dying, and while she vainly tried to induce it to accompany her, it rolled over, and floated dead at her side. Perceiving it to be beyond the reach of her caresses, she turned to wreak her vengeance on its slayers, and made directly for the boat, crashing her vast jaws the while, in a paroxysm of rage. Ordering his boat-steerer aft, the mate sprang forward, cut the line loose from the calf, and then snatched from the crotch the remaining iron, which he plunged with his gathered strength into the body of the mother, as the boat sheered off to avoid her onset. I saw that the work was well done, but had no time to mark the issue; for at that instant, a whale 'breached' at the distance of about a mile from us, on the starboard quarter. The glimpse I caught of the animal in his descent, convinced me that I once more beheld my old acquaintance, Mocha Dick. That falling mass was white as a snow-drift!

'One might have supposed the recognition mutual, for no sooner was his vast square head lifted from the sea, than he charged down upon us, scattering the billows into spray as he advanced, and leaving a wake of foam a rod in width, from the violent lashing of his flukes.

''He's making for the bloody water!' cried the men, as he cleft his way toward the very spot where the calf had been killed. 'Here, harpooner, steer the boat, and let me dart!' I exclaimed, as I leaped into the bows. 'May the '*Goneys*' eat me, if he dodge us *this* time, though he were Beelzebub himself! Pull for the red water!'

'As I spoke, the fury of the animal seemed suddenly to die away. He paused in his career, and lay passive on the waves, with his arching back thrown up like the ridge of a mountain. 'The old sog's lying to!' I cried, exultingly. 'Spring, boys! spring *now*, and we have him! All my clothes, tobacco, every thing I've got, shall be yours, only lay me 'longside that whale before another boat comes up! My *grimky!* what a hump! Only look at the irons in his back! No, do n't *look*—PULL! Now, boys, if you care about seeing your sweethearts and wives in old Nantuck!—if you love Yankee-land—if you love *me*—pull ahead, *wont* ye? Now then, to the thwarts! Lay back, my boys! I feel ye, my hearties! Give her the touch! Only five seas off! *Not* five seas off! One minute—*half* a minute more! Softly—no noise! Softly with your oars! That will do——'

'And as the words were uttered, I raised the harpoon above my head, took a rapid but no less certain aim, and sent it, hissing, deep into his thick white side!

''Stern all! for your lives!' I shouted; for at the instant the steel quivered in his body, the wounded leviathan plunged his head beneath the surface, and whirling around with great velocity, smote the sea violently, with fin and fluke, in a convulsion of rage and pain.

'Our little boat flew dancing back from the seething vortex around him, just in season to escape being overwhelmed or crushed. He now started to run. For a short time, the line rasped, smoking, through the chocks. A few turns round the loggerhead then secured it; and with oars a-peak, and bows tilted to the sea, we went leaping onward in the wake of the tethered monster. Vain were all his struggles to break from our hold. The strands were too strong, the barbed iron too deeply fleshed, to give way. So that whether he essayed to dive or breach, or dash madly forward, the frantic creature still felt that he was held in check. At one moment, in impotent rage, he reared his immense blunt head, covered with barnacles, high above the surge; while his jaws fell together with a crash that almost made me shiver; then the upper outline of his vast form was dimly seen, gliding amidst showers of sparkling spray; while streaks of crimson on the white surf that boiled in his track, told that the shaft had been driven home.

'By this time, the whole 'school' was about us; and spouts from a hundred spiracles, with a roar that almost deafened us, were raining on every side; while in the midst of a vast surface of chafing sea, might be seen the black shapes of the rampant herd, tossing and plunging, like a legion of maddened demons. The second and third mates were in the very centre of this appalling commotion.

'At length, Dick began to lessen his impetuous speed. 'Now, my boys,' cried I, 'haul me on; wet the line, you second oarsman, as it comes in. Haul away, ship-mates!—why the devil do n't you haul? Leeward side—*leeward!* I tell you! Do n't you know how to approach a whale?'

'The boat brought fairly up upon his broadside as I spoke, and I gave him the lance just under the shoulder blade. At this moment, just as the boat's head was laid off; and I was straitening for a second lunge, my lance, which I had 'boned' in the first, a piercing cry from the boat-steerer drew my

attention quickly aft, and I saw the waist-boat, or more properly a fragment of it, falling through the air, and underneath, the dusky forms of the struggling crew, grasping at the oars, or clinging to portions of the wreck; while a pair of flukes, descending in the midst of the confusion, fully accounted for the catastrophe. The boat had been struck and shattered by a whale!

''Good heaven!' I exclaimed, with impatience, and in a tone which I fear showed me rather mortified at the interruption, than touched with proper feeling for the sufferers; 'good heavens!—had n't they sense enough to keep out of the red water! And I must lose this glorious prize, through their infernal stupidity!' This was the first outbreak of my selfishness.

''But we must not see them drown, boys,' I added, upon the instant; 'cut the line!' The order had barely passed my lips, when I caught sight of the captain, who had seen the accident from the quarter-deck, bearing down with oar and sail to the rescue.

''Hold on!' I thundered, just as the knife's edge touched the line; 'for the glory of old Nantuck, hold on! The captain will pick them up, and Mocha Dick will be ours, after all!'

'This affair occurred in half the interval I have occupied in the relation. In the mean time, with the exception of a slight shudder, which once or twice shook his ponderous frame, Dick lay perfectly quiet upon the water. But suddenly, as though goaded into exertion by some fiercer pang, he started from his lethargy with apparently augmented power. Making a leap toward the boat, he darted perpendicularly downward, hurling the after oarsman, who was helmsman at the time, ten feet over the quarter, as he struck the long steering-oar in his descent. The unfortunate seaman fell, with his head forward, just upon the flukes of the whale, as he vanished, and was drawn down by suction of the closing waters, as if he had been a feather. After being carried to a great depth, as we inferred from the time he remained below the surface, he came up, panting and exhausted, and was dragged on board, amidst the hearty congratulations of his comrades.

'By this time two hundred fathoms of line had been carried spinning through the chocks, with an impetus that gave back in steam the water cast upon it. Still the gigantic creature bored his way downward, with undiminished speed. Coil after coil went over, and was swallowed up. There remained but three flakes in the tub!

''Cut!' I shouted; 'cut quick, or he'll take us down!' But as I spoke, the hissing line flew with trebled velocity through the smoking wood, jerking the knife he was in the act of applying to the heated strands out of the hand of the boat-steerer. The boat rose on end, and her bows were buried in an instant; a hurried ejaculation, at once shriek and prayer, rose to the lips of the bravest, when, unexpected mercy! the whizzing cord lost its tension, and our light bark, half filled with water, fell heavily back on her keel. A tear was in every eye, and I believe every heart bounded with gratitude, at this unlooked-for deliverance.

'Overpowered by his wounds, and exhausted by his exertions and the enormous pressure of the water above him, the immense creature was compelled to turn once more upward, for a fresh supply of air. And upward he came, indeed; shooting twenty feet of his gigantic length above the waves, by the impulse of his ascent. He was not disposed to be idle. Hardly had we succeeded in bailing out our swamping boat, when he again darted away, as it seemed to me with renewed energy. For a quarter of a mile, we parted the opposing waters as though they had offered no more resistance

than air. Our game then abruptly brought to, and lay as if paralyzed, his massy frame quivering and twitching, as if under the influence of galvanism. I gave the word to haul on; and seizing a boat-spade, as we came near him, drove it twice into his small; no doubt partially disabling him by the vigor and certainty of the blows. Wheeling furiously around, he answered this salutation, by making a desperate dash at the boat's quarter. We were so near him, that to escape the shock of his onset, by any practicable manœuvre, was out of the question. But at the critical moment, when we expected to be crushed by the collision, his powers seemed to give way. The fatal lance had reached the seat of life. His strength failed him in mid career, and sinking quietly beneath our keel, grazing it as he wallowed along, he rose again a few rods from us, on the side opposite that where he went down.

''Lay around, my boys, and let us set on him!' I cried, for I saw his spirit was broken at last. But the lance and spade were needless now. The work was done. The dying animal was struggling in a whirlpool of bloody foam, and the ocean far around was tinted with crimson. 'Stern all!' I shouted, as he commenced running impetuously in a circle, beating the water alternately with his head and flukes, and smiting his teeth ferociously into their sockets, with a crashing sound, in the strong spasms of dissolution. 'Stern all! or we shall be stove!'

'As I gave the command, a stream of black, clotted gore rose in a thick spout above the expiring brute, and fell in a shower around, bedewing, or rather drenching us, with a spray of blood.

''*There's the flag!*' I exclaimed; 'there! thick as tar! Stem! every soul of ye! He 's going in his flurry!' And the monster, under the convulsive influence of his final paroxysm, flung his huge tail into the air, and then, for the space of a minute, thrashed the waters on either side of him with quick and powerful blows; the sound of the concussions resembling that of the rapid discharge of artillery. He then turned slowly and heavily on his side, and lay a dead mass upon the sea through which he had so long ranged a conqueror.

''He 's fin up at last!' I screamed, at the very top of my voice. 'Hurrah! hurrah! hurrah!' And snatching off my cap, I sent it spinning aloft, jumping at the same time from thwart to thwart, like a madman.

'We now drew alongside our floating spoil; and I seriously question if the brave commodore who first, and so nobly, broke the charm of British invincibility, by the capture of the Guerriere,[7] felt a warmer rush of delight, as he beheld our national flag waving over the British ensign, in assurance of his victory, than I did, as I leaped upon the quarter deck of Dick's back, planted my wafe-pole in the midst, and saw the little canvass flag, that tells so important and satisfactory a tale to the whaleman, fluttering above my hard-earned prize.

'The captain and second mate, each of whom had been fortunate enough to kill his fish, soon after pulled up, and congratulated me on my capture. From them I learned the particulars of the third mate's disaster. He had fastened, and his fish was sounding, when another whale suddenly rose, almost directly beneath the boat, and with a single blow of his small, absolutely cut it in twain, flinging the bows, and those who occupied that portion of the frail fabric, far into the air. Rendered insensible, or

7. The defeat and sinking of the *Guerriere* in August 1812, by the United States *Constitution*, was a tremendous boost to American morale.

immediately killed by the shock, two of the crew sank without a struggle, while a third, unable in his confusion to disengage himself from the flakes of the tow-line, with which he had become entangled, was, together with the fragment to which the warp was attached, borne down by the harpooned whale, and was seen no more! The rest, some of them severely bruised, were saved from drowning by the timely assistance of the captain.

'To get the harness on Dick, was the work of an instant; and as the ship, taking every advantage of a light breeze which had sprung up within the last hour, had stood after us, and was now but a few rods distant, we were soon under her stern. The other fish, both of which were heavy fellows, lay floating near; and the tackle being affixed to one of them without delay, all hands were soon busily engaged in cutting in. Mocha Dick was the longest whale I ever looked upon. He measured more than seventy feet from his noddle to the tips of his flukes; and yielded one hundred barrels of clear oil, with a proportionate quantity of 'head-matter.' It may emphatically be said, that 'the scars of his old wounds were near his new,'[8] for not less than twenty harpoons did we draw from his back; the rusted mementos of many a desperate rencounter.'

The mate was silent. His yarn was reeled off. His story was told; and with far better tact than is exhibited by many a modern orator, he had the modesty and discretion to stop with its termination. In response, a glass of 'o-be-joyful' went merrily round; and this tribute having been paid to courtesy, the vanquisher of Mocha Dick was unanimously called upon for a song. Too sensible and too good-natured to wait for a second solicitation, when he had the power to oblige, he took a 'long pull' and a strong, at the grog as an appropriate overture to the occasion, and then, in a deep, sonorous tone, gave us the following professional ballad, accompanied by a superannuated hand-organ, which constituted the musical portion of the cabin furniture:

I.

'Do n't bother my head about catching of seals!
To me there's more glory in catching of eels;
Give me a tight ship, and under snug sail,
And I ask for no more, 'long side the sperm whale,
In the Indian Ocean,
Or Pacific Ocean,
No matter *what* ocean;
Pull ahead, yo heave O!

II.

'When our anchor's a-peak, sweethearts and wives
Yield a warm drop at parting, breathe a prayer for our lives;
With hearts full of promise, they kiss off the tear
From the eye that grows rarely dim—never with fear!
Then for the ocean, boys,
The billow's commotion, boys,
That's our devotion, boys,
Pull ahead, yo heave O!

8. Lord Byron, *Don Juan*, 5.38.1.

III.

'Soon we hear the glad cry of 'Town O!'—there she blows!'
Slow as night, my brave fellows, to leeward she goes:
Hard up! square the yards! then steady, lads, so!
Cries the captain, 'My maiden lance soon shall she know!'
'Now we get near, boys,
In with the gear, boys,
Swing the cranes clear, boys;
Pull ahead, yo heave O!'

IV.

'Our boat's in the water, each man at his oar
Bends strong to the sea, while his bark bounds before,
As the fish of all sizes, still flouncing and blowing,
With fluke and broad fin, scorn the best of hard rowing:
'Hang to the oar, boys,
Another stroke more, boys;
Now line the oar, boys;
Pull ahead, yo heave O!'

V.

'Then rises long Tom, who never knew fear;
Cries the captain, 'Now nail her, my bold harpooner!'
He speeds home his lance, then exclaims, 'I am fast!'
While blood, in a torrent, leaps high as the mast:
'Starn! starn! hurry, hurry, boys!
She's gone in her flurry, boys,
She 'll soon be in 'gurry,' boys!
Pull ahead, yo heave O!'

VI.

'Then give me a whaleman, wherever he be,
Who fears not a fish that can swim the salt sea;
Then give me a tight ship, and under snug sail,
And last lay me 'side of the noble sperm whale;
'In the Indian ocean,
Or Pacific ocean,
No matter *what* ocean;
Pull ahead, yo heave O!'

The song 'died away into an echo,' and we all confessed ourselves delighted with it—save and except the gallant knight of the seal-club. He indeed allowed the lay and the music to be well enough, considering the subject; but added: 'If you want to hear genuine, heart-stirring harmony, you must listen to a rookery of fur seal. For many an hour, on the rocks round Cape Horn, have I sat thus, listening to these gentry, as they clustered on the shelving cliffs above me; the surf beating at my feet, while——'

'Come, come, my old fellow!' exclaimed the captain, interrupting the loquacious sealer; 'you forget the evening you are to have at Santa Maria. It is three o'clock in the morning, and more.' Bidding farewell to our social

and generous entertainers, we were soon safely on board our ship, when we immediately made all sail to the north.

To me, the evening had been one of singular enjoyment. Doubtless the particulars of the tale were in some degree highly colored, from the desire of the narrator to present his calling in a prominent light, and especially one that should eclipse the occupation of sealing. But making every allowance for what, after all, may be considered a natural embellishment, the facts presented may be regarded as a fair specimen of the adventures which constitute so great a portion of the romance of a whaler's life; a life which, viewing all the incidents that seem inevitably to grow out of the enterprise peculiar to it, can be said to have no parallel. Yet vast as the field is, occupied by this class of our resolute seamen, how little can we claim to know of the particulars of a whaleman's existence! That our whale ships leave port, and usually return, in the course of three years, with full cargoes, to swell the fund of national wealth, is nearly the sum of our knowledge concerning them. Could we comprehend, at a glance, the mighty surface of the Indian or Pacific seas, what a picture would open upon us of unparalleled industry and daring enterprise! What scenes of toil along the coast of Japan, up the straits of Mozambique, where the dangers of the storm, impending as they may be, are less regarded than the privations and sufferings attendant upon exclusion from all intercourse with the shore! Sail onward, and extend your view around New-Holland, to the coast of Guinea; to the eastern and western shores of Africa; to the Cape of Good Hope; and south, to the waters that lash the cliffs of Kergulan's Land, and you are ever upon the whaling-ground of the American seaman. Yet onward, to the vast expanse of the two Pacifics, with their countless summer isles, and your course is still over the common arena and highway of our whalers. The varied records of the commercial world can furnish no precedent, can present no comparison, to the intrepidity, skill, and fortitude, which seem the peculiar prerogatives of this branch of our marine. These characteristics are not the growth of forced exertion; they are incompatible with it. They are the natural result of the ardor of a free people; of a spirit of fearless independence, generated by free institutions. Under such institutions alone, can the human mind attain its fullest expansion, in the various departments of science, and the multiform pursuits of busy life.

HERMAN MELVILLE

[The Captain and Crew of the *Acushnet* on Melville's Voyage][†]

Captain Pease—retired & lives ashore at the Vineyard [Valentine Pease, Jr.]

Raymond 1st Mate—had a fight with the Captain & went ashore at Payta [Frederick R. Raymond]—

Hall 2d Mate came home & went to California. [John Hall]

3d Mate, Portuguese, went ashore at Payta [George W. Galvan]

Boatsteerer Brown Portuguese, either ran away or killed at Ropo [Roa-pua] one of the Marquesas [Martin Brown]

Smith went ashore at Santa coast of Peru, afterwards committed suicide at Mobile [Daniel Smith]

Barney boatsteerer came home [William Barnard]

Carpenter went ashore at Mowee [Maui] half dead with disreputable disease. [Henry Harmer]

The Crew

Tom Johnson, black, went ashore at Mowee half dead (ditto) & died at the hospital [Thomas Johnson]

Reed—mulatto—came home. [Enoch Read]

Blacksmith—ran away at St: Francisco. [Ephraim Walcott]

Backus—little black—D[itt]o [John Backus]

Bill Green—after various attempts at running away, came home in the end. [Carlos W. Green]

The Irishman run away at Salango coast of Columbia [Colombia] [James Rosman]

Wright went ashore half dead at the Marquesas. [John Wright]

John Adams & Jo Portuguese came home. [John Adams, Joseph Luis]

The old cook came home. [William Maiden]

Hayner run away aboard of a Sydney ship.

Little Jack—came home. [J. Warren Steadman]

Grant—young fellow—went ashore half dead, spitting blood, at Oahu [Henry Grant]

Murray went ashore, shunning fight, at Rio Janeiro. [Robert Murry]—The Cooper—came home. [Joseph Broadnick]

† Melville made this memorandum on or after March 23, 1853, when his shipmate Henry F. Hubbard, who returned in the *Acushnet*, visited him at Arrowhead. The notes are in the Melville Collection of the Houghton Library at Harvard University. Copyright © 1988 by Northwestern University Press and the Newberry Library. Reprinted by permission of Northwestern UP as transcribed by Harrison Hayford and other editors for the Northwestern-Newberry edition (1988), p. 1003. Melville omitted himself and Hubbard as well as Richard Tobias Greene, whose "resurrection" made headlines in 1846 after the publication of *Typee*. When Hubbard died in Stockton, California, in 1887 the Sacramento *Record-Union* called him "a capitalist, who was worth about half a million," the owner of "valuable property in San Francisco." No newspaper mentioned that his gift from Melville might someday have monetary value, but see "The Hubbard Copy of *The Whale,*" in the 1988 Northwestern-Newberry edition of *Moby-Dick*.

OWEN CHASE

[The *Essex* Wrecked by a Whale]†

I have not been able to recur to the scenes which are now to become the subject of description, although a considerable time has elapsed, without feeling a mingled emotion of horror and astonishment at the almost incredible destiny that has preserved me and my surviving companions from a terrible death. Frequently, in my reflections on the subject, even after this lapse of time, I find myself shedding tears of gratitude for our deliverance, and blessing God, by whose divine aid and protection we were conducted through a series of unparalleled suffering and distress, and restored to the bosoms of our families and friends. There is no knowing what a stretch of pain and misery the human mind is capable of contemplating, when it is wrought upon by the anxieties of preservation; nor what pangs and weaknesses the body is able to endure, until they are visited upon it; and when at last deliverance comes, when the dream of hope is realized, unspeakable gratitude takes possession of the soul, and tears of joy choke the utterance. We require to be taught in the school of some signal suffering, privation, and despair, the great lessons of constant dependence upon an almighty forbearance and mercy. In the midst of the wide ocean, at night, when the sight of the heavens was shut out, and the dark tempest came upon us; then it was, that we felt ourselves ready to exclaim, "Heaven have mercy upon us, for nought but that can save us now." But I proceed to the recital.—On the 20th of November, (cruising in latitude 0° 40′ S. longitude 119° 0′ W.) a shoal of whales was discovered off the lee-bow. The weather at this time was extremely fine and clear, and it was about 8 o'clock in the morning, that the man at the mast-head gave the usual cry of, "there she blows." The ship was immediately put away, and we ran down in the direction for them. When we had got within half a mile of the place where they were observed, all our boats were lowered down, manned, and we started in pursuit of them. The ship, in the mean time, was brought to the wind, and the main-top-sail hove aback, to wait for us. I had the harpoon in the second boat; the captain preceded me in the first. When I arrived at the spot where we calculated they were, nothing was at first to be seen. We lay on our oars in anxious expectation of discovering them come up somewhere near us. Presently one rose, and spouted a short distance ahead of my boat; I made all speed towards it, came up with, and struck it; feeling the harpoon in him, he threw himself, in an agony, over towards the boat, (which at that time was up alongside of him,) and, giving a severe blow with his tail, struck the boat near the edge of the water, amidships, and stove a hole in her. I immediately took up the boat hatchet, and cut the line, to disengage the boat from the whale, which by this time was running off with great velocity. I succeeded in getting clear

† From *Narrative of the Most Extraordinary and Distressing Shipwreck of the Whale-Ship Essex, of Nantucket; Which Was Attacked and Finally Destroyed by a Large Spermaceti-Whale in the Pacific Ocean* (New York, 1821), pp. 23–41. The selection is all of Ch. 2 and the beginning of Ch. 3, which is given to show how, for dramatic effect, Melville made the *Pequod* sink much faster than did the *Essex*. Melville's extended reference to the *Essex* disaster in *Moby-Dick* is in Ch. 45. His manuscript notes, inserted in his own copy of Chase's *Narrative*, are reprinted on pp. 532–36.

of him, with the loss of the harpoon and line; and finding the water to pour fast in the boat, I hastily stuffed three or four of our jackets in the hole, ordered one man to keep constantly bailing, and the rest to pull immediately for the ship; we succeeded in keeping the boat free, and shortly gained the ship. The captain and the second mate, in the other two boats, kept up the pursuit, and soon struck another whale. They being at this time a considerable distance to leeward, I went forward, braced around the main-yard, and put the ship off in a direction for them; the boat which had been stove was immediately hoisted in, and after examining the hole, I found that I could, by nailing a piece of canvass over it, get her ready to join in a fresh pursuit, sooner than by lowering down the other remaining boat which belonged to the ship. I accordingly turned her over upon the quarter, and was in the act of nailing on the canvass, when I observed a very large spermaceti whale, as well as I could judge, about eighty-five feet in length; he broke water about twenty rods off our weather-bow, and was lying quietly, with his head in a direction for the ship. He spouted two or three times, and then disappeared. In less than two or three seconds he came up again, about the length of the ship off, and made directly for us, at the rate of about three knots. The ship was then going with about the same velocity. His appearance and attitude gave us at first no alarm; but while I stood watching his movements, and observing him but a ship's length off, coming down for us with great celerity, I involuntarily ordered the boy at the helm to put it hard up; intending to sheer off and avoid him. The words were scarcely out of my mouth, before he came down upon us with full speed, and struck the ship with his head, just forward of the fore-chains; he gave us such an appalling and tremendous jar, as nearly threw us all on our faces. The ship brought up as suddenly and violently as if she had struck a rock, and trembled for a few seconds like a leaf. We looked at each other with perfect amazement, deprived almost of the power of speech. Many minutes elapsed before we were able to realize the dreadful accident; during which time he passed under the ship, grazing her keel as he went along, came up alongside of her to leeward, and lay on the top of the water, (apparently stunned with the violence of the blow,) for the space of a minute; he then suddenly started off, in a direction to leeward. After a few moments' reflection, and recovering, in some measure, from the sudden consternation that had seized us, I of course concluded that he had stove a hole in the ship, and that it would be necessary to set the pumps going. Accordingly they were rigged, but had not been in operation more than one minute, before I perceived the head of the ship to be gradually settling down in the water; I then ordered the signal to be set for the other boats, which, scarcely had I despatched, before I again discovered the whale, apparently in convulsions, on the top of the water, about one hundred rods to leeward. He was enveloped in the foam of the sea, that his continual and violent thrashing about in the water had created around him, and I could distinctly see him smite his jaws together, as if distracted with rage and fury. He remained a short time in this situation, and then started off with great velocity, across the bows of the ship, to windward. By this time the ship had settled down a considerable distance in the water, and I gave her up as lost. I however, ordered the pumps to be kept constantly going, and endeavoured to collect my thoughts for the occasion. I turned to the boats, two of which we then had with the ship, with an intention of clearing them away, and getting all things ready to

embark in them, if there should be no other resource left; and while my attention was thus engaged for a moment, I was aroused with the cry of a man at the hatchway, "here he is—he is making for us again." I turned around, and saw him about one hundred rods directly ahead of us, coming down apparently with twice his ordinary speed, and to me at that moment, it appeared with tenfold fury and vengeance in his aspect. The surf flew in all directions about him, and his course towards us was marked by a white foam of a rod in width, which he made with the continual violent thrashing of his tail; his head was about half out of water, and in that way he came upon, and again struck the ship. I was in hopes when I descried him making for us, that by a dexterous movement of putting the ship away immediately, I should be able to cross the line of his approach, before he could get up to us, and thus avoid, what I knew, if he should strike us again, would prove our inevitable destruction. I bawled out to the helmsman, "hard up!" but she had not fallen off more than a point, before we took the second shock. I should judge the speed of the ship to have been at this time about three knots, and that of the whale about six. He struck her to windward, directly under the cathead, and completely stove in her bows. He passed under the ship again, went off to leeward, and we saw no more of him. Our situation at this juncture can be more readily imagined than described. The shock to our feelings was such, as I am sure none can have an adequate conception of, that were not there: the misfortune befel us at a moment when we least dreamt of any accident; and from the pleasing anticipations we had formed, of realizing the certain profits of our labour, we were dejected by a sudden, most mysterious, and overwhelming calamity. Not a moment, however, was to be lost in endeavouring to provide for the extremity to which it was now certain we were reduced. We were more than a thousand miles from the nearest land, and with nothing but a light open boat, as the resource of safety for myself and companions. I ordered the men to cease pumping, and every one to provide for himself; seizing a hatchet at the same time, I cut away the lashings of the spare boat, which lay bottom up across two spars directly over the quarter deck, and cried out to those near me, to take her as she came down. They did so accordingly, and bore her on their shoulders as far as the waist of the ship. The steward had in the mean time gone down into the cabin twice, and saved two quadrants, two practical navigators, and the captain's trunk and mine; all which were hastily thrown into the boat, as she lay on the deck, with the two compasses which I snatched from the binnacle. He attempted to descend again; but the water by this time had rushed in, and he returned without being able to effect his purpose. By the time we had got the boat to the waist, the ship had filled with water, and was going down on her beam-ends: we shoved our boat as quickly as possible from the plank-shear into the water, all hands jumping in her at the same time, and launched off clear of the ship. We were scarcely two boat's lengths distant from her, when she fell over to windward, and settled down in the water.

Amazement and despair now wholly took possession of us. We contemplated the frightful situation the ship lay in, and thought with horror upon the sudden and dreadful calamity that had overtaken us. We looked upon each other, as if to gather some consolatory sensation from an interchange of sentiments, but every countenance was marked with the paleness of despair. Not a word was spoken for several minutes by any of us; all

appeared to be bound in a spell of stupid consternation; and from the time we were first attacked by the whale, to the period of the fall of the ship, and of our leaving her in the boat, more than ten minutes could not certainly have elapsed! God only knows in what way, or by what means, we were enabled to accomplish in that short time what we did; the cutting away and transporting the boat from where she was deposited would of itself, in ordinary circumstances, have consumed as much time as that, if the whole ship's crew had been employed in it. My companions had not saved a single article but what they had on their backs; but to me it was a source of infinite satisfaction, if any such could be gathered from the horrors of our gloomy situation, that we had been fortunate enough to have preserved our compasses, navigators, and quadrants. After the first shock of my feelings was over, I enthusiastically contemplated them as the probable instruments of our salvation; without them all would have been dark and hopeless. Gracious God! what a picture of distress and suffering now presented itself to my imagination. The crew of the ship were saved, consisting of twenty human souls. All that remained to conduct these twenty beings through the stormy terrors of the ocean, perhaps many thousand miles, were three open light boats. The prospect of obtaining any provisions or water from the ship, to subsist upon during the time, was at least now doubtful. How many long and watchful nights, thought I, are to be passed? How many tedious days of partial starvation are to be endured, before the least relief or mitigation of our sufferings can be reasonably anticipated. We lay at this time in our boat, about two ship's lengths off from the wreck, in perfect silence, calmly contemplating her situation, and absorbed in our own melancholy reflections, when the other boats were discovered rowing up to us. They had but shortly before discovered that some accident had befallen us, but of the nature of which they were entirely ignorant. The sudden and mysterious disappearance of the ship was first discovered by the boat-steerer in the captain's boat, and with a horror-struck countenance and voice, he suddenly exclaimed, "Oh, my God! where is the ship?" Their operations upon this were instantly suspended, and a general cry of horror and despair burst from the lips of every man, as their looks were directed for her, in vain, over every part of the ocean. They immediately made all haste towards us. The captain's boat was the first that reached us. He stopped about a boat's length off, but had no power to utter a single syllable: he was so completely overpowered with the spectacle before him, that he sat down in his boat, pale and speechless. I could scarcely recognise his countenance, he appeared to be so much altered, awed, and overcome, with the oppression of his feelings, and the dreadful reality that lay before him. He was in a short time however enabled to address the inquiry to me, "My God, Mr. Chase, what is the matter?" I answered, "We have been stove by a whale." I then briefly told him the story. After a few moments' reflection he observed, that we must cut away her masts, and endeavour to get something out of her to eat. Our thoughts were now all accordingly bent on endeavours to save from the wreck whatever we might possibly want, and for this purpose we rowed up and got on to her. Search was made for every means of gaining access to her hold; and for this purpose the lanyards were cut loose, and with our hatchets we commenced to cut away the masts, that she might right up again, and enable us to scuttle her decks. In doing which we were occupied about three quarters of an hour, owing to our having no axes,

nor indeed any other instruments, but the small hatchets belonging to the boats. After her masts were gone she came up about two-thirds of the way upon an even keel. While we were employed about the masts the captain took his quadrant, shoved off from the ship, and got an observation. We found ourselves in latitude 0° 40′ S. longitude 119° W. We now commenced to cut a hole through the planks, directly above two large casks of bread, which most fortunately were between decks, in the waist of the ship, and which being in the upper side, when she upset, we had strong hopes was not wet. It turned out according to our wishes, and from these casks we obtained six hundred pounds of hard bread. Other parts of the deck were then scuttled, and we got without difficulty as much fresh water as we dared to take in the boats, so that each was supplied with about sixty-five gallons; we got also from one of the lockers a musket, a small canister of powder, a couple of files, two rasps, about two pounds of boat nails, and a few turtle. In the afternoon the wind came on to blow a strong breeze; and having obtained every thing that occurred to us could then be got out, we began to make arrangements for our safety during the night. A boat's line was made fast to the ship, and to the other end of it one of the boats was moored, at about fifty fathoms to leeward; another boat was then attached to the first one, about eight fathoms astern; and the third boat, the like distance astern of her. Night came on just as we had finished our operations; and such a night as it was to us! so full of feverish and distracting inquietude, that we were deprived entirely of rest. The wreck was constantly before my eyes. I could not, by any effort, chase away the horrors of the preceding day from my mind: they haunted me the live-long night. My companions—some of them were like sick women; they had no idea of the extent of their deplorable situation. One or two slept unconcernedly, while others wasted the night in unavailing murmurs. I now had full leisure to examine, with some degree of coolness, the dreadful circumstances of our disaster. The scenes of yesterday passed in such quick succession in my mind that it was not until after many hours of severe reflection that I was able to discard the idea of the catastrophe as a dream. Alas! it was one from which there was no awaking; it was too certainly true, that but yesterday we had existed as it were, and in one short moment had been cut off from all the hopes and prospects of the living! I have no language to paint out the horrors of our situation. To shed tears was indeed altogether unavailing, and withal unmanly; yet I was not able to deny myself the relief they served to afford me. After several hours of idle sorrow and repining I began to reflect upon the accident, and endeavoured to realize by what unaccountable destiny or design, (which I could not at first determine,) this sudden and most deadly attack had been made upon us: by an animal, too, never before suspected of premeditated violence, and proverbial for its insensibility and inoffensiveness. Every fact seemed to warrant me in concluding that it was any thing but chance which directed his operations; he made two several attacks upon the ship, at a short interval between them, both of which, according to their direction, were calculated to do us the most injury, by being made ahead, and thereby combining the speed of the two objects for the shock; to effect which, the exact manœuvres which he made were necessary. His aspect was most horrible, and such as indicated resentment and fury. He came directly from the shoal which we had just before entered, and in which we had struck three of his companions, as if fired with revenge for their sufferings. But to this it

may be observed, that the mode of fighting which they always adopt is either with repeated strokes of their tails, or snapping of their jaws together; and that a case, precisely similar to this one, has never been heard of amongst the oldest and most experienced whalers. To this I would answer, that the structure and strength of the whale's head is admirably designed for this mode of attack; the most prominent part of which is almost as hard and as tough as iron; indeed, I can compare it to nothing else but the inside of a horse's hoof, upon which a lance or harpoon would not make the slightest impression. The eyes and ears are removed nearly one-third the length of the whole fish, from the front part of the head, and are not in the least degree endangered in this mode of attack. At all events, the whole circumstances taken together, all happening before my own eyes, and producing, at the time, impressions in my mind of decided, calculating mischief, on the part of the whale, (many of which impressions I cannot now recall,) induce me to be satisfied that I am correct in my opinion. It is certainly, in all its bearings, a hitherto unheard of circumstance, and constitutes, perhaps, the most extraordinary one in the annals of the fishery.

November 21st. The morning dawned upon our wretched company. The weather was fine, but the wind blew a strong breeze from the SE. and the sea was very rugged. Watches had been kept up during the night, in our respective boats, to see that none of the spars or other articles (which continued to float out of the wreck,) should be thrown by the surf against, and injure the boats. At sunrise, we began to think of doing something; what, we did not know: we cast loose our boats, and visited the wreck, to see if any thing more of consequence could be preserved, but every thing looked cheerless and desolate, and we made a long and vain search for any useful article; nothing could be found but a few turtle; of these we had enough already; or at least, as many as could be safely stowed in the boats, and we wandered around in every part of the ship in a sort of vacant idleness for the greater part of the morning. We were presently aroused to a perfect sense of our destitute and forlorn condition, by thoughts of the means which we had for our subsistence, the necessity of not wasting our time, and of endeavouring to seek some relief wherever God might direct us.

HERMAN MELVILLE

[Manuscript Notes on Owen Chase]†

While writing *Moby-Dick* Melville asked his father-in-law, Lemuel Shaw, Chief Justice of the Massachusetts Supreme Court, to help him locate a copy of the exceedingly rare *Narrative* by the Nantucket whaler Owen Chase (see pp. 527–32 in this Norton Critical Edition), knowing that Shaw was widely

† From Owen Chase, *Narrative of the Most Extraordinary and Distressing Shipwreck of the Whale-Ship Essex, of Nantucket* (New York: W. B. Gilley, 1821). This volume is now in the Houghton Library of Harvard University (*AC85 M4977 R821c [B]). The 1967 Hayford-Parker text has been slightly modified by insertions in square brackets to record three or four later readings in the Northwestern-Newberry Edition (1988). The NN Edition prints a clear photo-facsimile of each page of Melville's notes and a line-by-line transcription of those notes, as well as fuller information about the provenience of the book and the dating and accuracy of the notes.

acquainted in Nantucket, where he held court every summer. Thomas Macy searched for Shaw but found only a copy lacking several pages; that volume Melville happily received around April 1851, too late to be much if any direct help with *Moby-Dick*. Prizing the imperfect book, Melville soon had it bound with blank leaves at the end and began making notes in it, and resumed doing so years later.

Melville's notes contain some obvious errors of fact: it is impossible that the whale-hunter who came aboard the *Acushnet* was Owen Chase, who was not at sea at the time; also, Chase's son whom Melville met was not the son of the unfaithful wife, and Chase's divorce from her (Judge Shaw presiding in the case) had occurred in 1840, before Melville sailed on the *Acushnet*. See Parker, *Herman Melville* (1.194–199): "In all Melville's life he is not known to have so intricately tangled up so much misapprehension and misinformation as he did about Own Chase" (197). Melville's confusions about Chase (whose name he always misspelled Chace), the *Charles Carroll*, the *William Wirt*, and other matters signal not a lack of interest but rather a powerfully heightened imaginative interest in American men who had survived by eating human flesh. During a decade of brooding over the wreck of the *Essex* Melville had come to associate survival by cannibalism with the Greek myth in which Cronos swallows his children, and had begun to make personal application to his own father's eating up his eight children's inheritances before he died. When he makes Ahab call himself "cannibal old me" (Ch. 132) Melville had at least "some inkling of why he had been so moved when he saw an American he thought had been a cannibal—even when he identified the wrong man" (Parker, 1.199).

[2] *General Evidences*

This thing of the Essex is found (stupidly abbreviated) in many compilations of nautical adventure made within the last 15 or 20 years.

The Englishman Bennett in his exact work ("Whaling Voyage round the Globe") quotes the thing as an acknowledged fact.

Besides seamen, several landsman (Judge Shaw & others) acquainted with Nantucket, have evinced to me their unquestioning faith in the thing; having seen Captain Pollard himself, & being conversant with his situation in Nantucket since the disaster.[1]

[3] *What I Know of Owen Chace &c*

When I was on board the ship Acushnet of Fairhaven, on the passage of the Pacific cruising-grounds, among other matters of forecastle conversation at times was the story of the Essex. It was then that I first became acquainted with her history and her truly astounding fate.

But what then served to specialise my interest at the time was the circumstance that the [4] Second mate of our ship, Mr Hall, an Englishman & Londoner by birth, had for two three-years voyages sailed with Owen Chace (then in command of the whale-ship "William Wirt"[2] (I think it was) of Nantucket.) This Hall always spoke of Chace with much interest & sincere regard—but he did not seem to know any thing more about him or the Essex affair than any body else.

1. On July 8, 1852, when Melville accompanied Judge Shaw during his judicial duties in Nantucket.
2. Here Melville noted "See p. 19. Of M.S." but he meant 16, not 19. See p. 534, just below.

Somewhere about the latter part of A. D. 1841, in this same ship the Acushnet, we spoke the [5] "W^m Wirt" of Nantucket, & Owen Chace was the Captain, & so it came to pass that I saw him. He was a large, powerful well-made man; rather tall; to all appearances something past forty-five or so; with a handsome face for a Yankee, & expressive of great uprightness & calm unostentatious courage. His whole appearance impressed me pleasurably. He was the most prepossessing-looking whale-hunter I think I ever saw.

——Being a mear foremast-hand I had no opportunity of conversing with Owen (tho' he was [6] on board our ship for two hours at a time) nor have I ever seen him since.

But I should have before mentioned, that before seeing Chace's ship, we spoke another Nantucket craft & *gammed* with her. In the forecastle I made the acquaintance of a fine lad of sixteen or thereabouts, a son of Owen Chace. I questioned him concerning his father's adventure; and when I left his ship to return again the next morning (for the two vessels were to sail in company for a few days [7] he went to his chest & handed me a complete copy (same edition as this one) of the *Narrative*. This was the first printed account of it I had ever seen, & the only copy of Chace's Narrative (regular & authentic) except the present one. The reading of this wondrous story upon the landless sea, & close to the very latitude of the shipwreck had a surprising effect upon me. [*Pages 8–13 are blank.*]

[14] *Authorship of the Book*

There seems no reason to suppose that Owen himself wrote the Narrative. It bears obvious tokens of having been written for him; but at the same time, its whole air plainly evinces that it was carefully & conscientiously written to Owen's dictation of the facts.—It is almost as good as tho' Owen wrote it himself.

[15] *Another Narrative of the Adventure*

I have been told that Pollard the Captain, wrote, or caused to be wrote under his own name, his version of the story. I have seen extracts purporting to be from some such work. But I have never seen the work itself.—I should imagine Owen Chace to have been the fittest person to narrate the thing.

[16] *Note*

Vide ante[3] p.p. 4–5, M.S.

I was doubtful a little at the time of writing whether this ship was the Wm. Wirt. I am now certain that it was the *Charles Carroll* of which Owen Chace was Captain for several voyages.

[17]

Since writing the foregoing I—sometime about 1850–3—saw Capt. Pollard on the island of Nantucket, and exchanged some words with him. To the islanders he was a nobody—to me, the most [18] impressive man, tho' wholly unassuming, even humble—that I ever encountered. [*Pages 19–20 missing.*]

3. Melville's note to himself, "See earlier."

[21] *Sequel*

——I can not tell exactly how many more pages the complete narrative contains—but at any rate, very little more remains to be related.—The boat was picked up by the ship, & the poor fellows were landed in Chili & in time sailed for home. Owen Chace returned to his business of whaling, & in due time became a Captain, as related in the beginning.

Captain Pollard's boat (from which Chace's had become separated) was also after a miserable time, picked up by a ship, but not [22] until two of its crew had died delirious, & furnished food for the survivors.

The third boat, it does not appear, that it was ever heard of, after its sub-separation from Pollard's.

Pollard himself returned to Nantucket, & subsequently sailed on another whaling voyage to the Pacific, but he had not been in the Pacific long, when one night, his ship went ashore or unknown rocks, & was dashed to peaces. The crew, with Pollard, put off in their boats, & were soon picked up by [23] another whale-ship, with which, the day previous, they had sailed in company.—I got this from Hall, Second Mate of the *Acushnet*.—

Pollard, it seems, now took the hint, & after reaching home from this second shipwreck, vowed to abide ashore. He has ever since lived in Nantucket. Hall told me that he became a butcher there. I believe he is still living. [*Added in pencil and underlined three times:* A night-watchman]

Concerning the three men left on the island;—they were taken off at last (in a sad state enough) by a ship, which [24] purposely touched there for them, being advised of them, by their shipmates who had been previously landed in Chili.

——All the sufferings of these miserable men of the Essex might, in all human probability, have been avoided, had they, immediately after leaving the wreck, steered straight for Tahiti, from which they were not very distant at the time, & to which, there was a fair Trade wind. But they dreaded cannibals, & strange to tell knew not that for more than 20 years, the English [25] missionaries had been resident in Tahiti; & that in the same year of their shipwreck—1820—it was entirely safe for the mariner to touch at Tahiti.

——But they chose to stem a head wind, & make a passage of several thousand miles (an unavoidably roundabout one, too) in order to gain a civilised harbor on the coast of South America.

[26] *Further Concerning Owen Chace*

The miserable pertinaciousness of misfortune which pursued Pollard the Captain, in his second disastrous & entire shipwreck, did likewise hunt[4] poor Owen, tho' somewhat more dilatory in overtaking him, the second time.

For, while I was in the *Acushnet* we heard from some whale-ship that we spoke, that the Captain of the *"Charles Carrol"*—that is Owen Chace—had recently received letters from home, informing him of the certain infidelity of his wife, the mother of several children, one of them

4. This word may be "haunt," not "hunt."

being the lad of sixteen, whom I alluded to as giving me a copy of his father's narrative to read. We also heard that this receipt of this news had told most heavily upon Chace, & that he was a prey to the deepest gloom.

HERMAN MELVILLE

[Review of J. Ross Browne and Captain Ringbolt]†

Etchings of a Whaling Cruise, with Notes of a Sojourn on the Island of Zanzibar. To which is appended, a Brief History of the Whale Fishery; its Past and Present Condition. By J. Ross Browne. Illustrated with numerous Engravings on Steel and Wood. Harper & Brothers: 1846. 8vo.
Sailors' Life and Sailors' Yarns. By Captain Ringbolt. New York: C. S. Francis & Co. 1847. 12mo.

From time immemorial many fine things have been said and sung of the sea. The days have been, when sailors were considered veritable mermen;[1] and the ocean itself, as the peculiar theatre of the romantic and wonderful. But of late years there have been revealed so many plain, matter-of-fact details connected with nautical life that at the present day the poetry of salt water is very much on the wane. The perusal of Dana's "Two Years before the Mast," for instance, somewhat impairs the relish with which we read Byron's spiritual "Address to the Ocean."[2] And when the noble poet raves about laying his hands upon the ocean's mane (in other words manipulating the crest of a wave), the most vivid image suggested is that of a valetudinarian bather at Rockaway,[3] spluttering and choking in the surf, with his mouth full of brine.

Mr. J. Ross Browne's narrative tends still further to impair the charm with which poesy[4] and fiction have invested the sea. It is a book of unvarnished facts; and with some allowances for the general application of an individual example unquestionably presents a faithful picture of the life led by the twenty thousand seamen employed in the seven hundred whaling vessels which pursue their game under the American flag.[5] Indeed,

† The New York *Literary World* (March 6, 1847). Transcribed by Harrison Hayford and Hershel Parker for the first edition of this volume. The manuscript of this two-in-one review is in the Duyckinck Collection of the New York Public Library. It is in Melville's own hand and much of it is unusually legible, but the printing in the *Literary World* contained several misreadings of his handwriting, like those pointed out in notes to his essay on Hawthorne (reprinted on pp. 544–58) and in *Moby-Dick* itself. This is a slightly normalized reading text, following punctuation from the manuscript rather than the comma-ridden *Literary World* text, but with *LW* expansions of abbreviations and corrections of spelling errors such as "Brown" for "Browne." Footnotes call attention to Melville's revisions and to points where the 1967 NCE restored the manuscript reading for the first time. "Captain Ringbolt" is a pseudonym for John Codman (1814–1900).

1. Melville first wrote "veritable mermen; ships, floating prodigies; & the ocean itself." Then in the same ink he deleted "ships, floating prodigies;"—one of the few revisions in this fair copy manuscript.
2. In *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* (1816), Lord Byron declaims, "roll on, thou deep and dark blue ocean—roll!" and declares, "from a boy / I wanton'd with thy breakers / And trusted to thy billows far and near, / And laid my hand upon thy mane" (stanzas 179, 184).
3. Rockaway Beach is on the south shore of Long Island.
4. The *LW* text had "poetry" here instead of what Melville wrote, "poesy."
5. Melville wrote "which now pursue their mighty game under the American flag," then deleted "now" and "mighty." *LW* carelessly restored "now" but not "mighty"; both should be deleted.

what Mr. Dana has so admirably done in describing the vicissitudes of the merchant sailor's life, Mr. Browne has very creditably achieved with respect to that of the hardy whaleman's. And the book which possesses this merit deserves much in the way of commendation. The personal narrative interwoven with it, also, cannot fail to enlist our sympathies for the adventurous author himself. The scenes presented are always graphically and truthfully sketched, and hence fastidious objections may be made to some of them, on the score of their being too coarsely or harshly drawn. But we take it, that as true, unreserved descriptions they are in no respect faulty—and, doubtless, the author never dreamed of softening down or withholding anything with a view of rendering his sketches the more attractive and pretty. The book is eminently a practical one; and written with the set purpose of accomplishing good by revealing the simple truth. When the brutal tyranny of the Captain of the "Styx" is painted without apology or palliation, it holds up the outrageous abuse to which seamen in our whaling marine are actually subjected, a matter which demands legislation.[6] Mr. Browne himself, it seems, was to some extent, the victim of the tyranny of which he complains, and, upon this ground, the personal bitterness in which he at times indulges may be deemed excusable.

As the book professes to embrace a detailed account of all that is interesting in the business of whaling, and, essentially, possesses this merit, one or two curious errors into which the author has unaccountably fallen may, without captiousness, be pointed out.——We are told, for example, of a whale's *roaring* when wounded by the harpoon. We can imagine the veteran Coffins, and Colemans, and Maceys of old Nantucket elevating their brows at the bare announcement of such a thing. Now the creature in question is as dumb as a shad, or any other of the finny tribes. And no doubt, if Jonah himself could be summoned to the stand, he would cheerfully testify to his not having heard a single syllable, growl, grunt, or bellow engendered in the ventricle cells of the leviathan during the irksome period of his incarceration therein.[7]

That in some encounters with the sperm whale a low indistinct sound *apparently* issues from the monster is true enough. But all Nantucket and New Bedford are divided as to the causes which produce the phenomenon.[8] Many suppose, however, that it is produced——not by the creature itself——but by the peculiar motion in the water of the line which is attached to the harpoon. For, if upon being struck, the whale "sounds" (descends) as is usually the case, and remains below the surface for any length of time, the rope frequently becomes as stiff as the cord of a harp, and the struggles of the animal keep it continually vibrating.

Considering the disenchanting nature of the revelations of sea life with which we are presented in Mr. Browne's book, we are inclined to believe that the shipping agents employed in our various cities by the merchants of New Bedford will have to present additional inducements to "enterprising

6. The *LW* makes no sense: "are actually subjected, or rather, which demands legislation"; the manuscript clearly reads "a matter" instead of "or rather."
7. Melville has been proved wrong. See the fascinating section on whale songs in Roger Payne's *Among Whales* (New York: Scribner, 1995), pp. 144–67. For Jonah in the whale, see Jonah 1 and 2 and *Moby-Dick*, Ch. 9.
8. The *LW* text quite destroys the sense of this passage by printing "decided" instead of "divided." Melville's "v" was more than once miscopied as "c"; in *Typee* what the first English edition printed as "traces" was all but surely "leaves" in the manuscript.

and industrious young Americans of good moral character," in order to persuade them to embark in the fishery. In particular, the benevolent old gentleman in Front street[9] (one of the shipping agents of whom our author discourseth) who so politely accosted Browne and his comrade, upon their entering his office for the purpose of seeking further information touching the rate of promotion in the whaling service—this old gentleman, we say, must hereafter infuse into his address still more of the *suaviter in modo*.[1]

As unaffectedly described by Browne, the scene alluded to is irresistibly comic. The agent's business, be it understood, consists in decoying "green hands" to send on to the different whaling ports. A conspicuous placard without the office announces to the anxious world, that a few choice vacancies remain to be filled in certain crews of whalemen about to sail upon the most delightful voyages imaginable (only four years long).——To secure a place, of course, instant application should be made.

Our author and his friend attracted by the placard, hurry up a ladder to a dark loft above, where the old man lurks like a spider in the midst of his toils.——But a single glance at the gentlemanly dress and white hands of his visitors impresses the wily agent with the idea that notwithstanding their calling upon him, they may very possibly have heard disagreeable accounts of the nature of whaling. So, after making a bow, and offering a few legs of a chair, he proceeds to disabuse their minds of any unfavorable impressions. Succeeding in this, he then becomes charmingly facetious and complimentary; assures the youths that they need not be concerned because of their slender waists and silken muscles, for those who employed him were not so particular about weight as beauty. In short the captains of whaling vessels preferred handsome young fellows who dressed well and conversed genteelly—in short, those who would reflect credit upon the business of tarring down rigging, and cutting up blubber. Delighted with the agreeable address of the old gentleman, and with many pleasant anticipations of sea life the visitors listen with increased attention. Whereupon the agent waxes eloquent, and enlarges upon his animating theme in the style parliamentary. "A whaler, gentlemen," he observes, "is the home of the unfortunate—the asylum of the oppressed," &c., &c., &c.

Duped Browne! Hapless H——! In the end, they enter into an engagement with the old gentleman, who subsequently sends them on to New Bedford consigned to a mercantile house there. From New Bedford the adventurers at length sail in a small whaling barque bound to the Indian Ocean. While yet half dead with sea sickness, the unfortunate H——is sent by the brutal captain to the masthead, to stand there his allotted two hours on the look out for whale-spouts. He receives a stroke of the sun, which, for a time, takes away his reason and endangers his life. He raves of home and friends, and poor Browne watching by his side, upbraids himself for having been concerned in bringing his companion to such a state.——Ere long the vessel touches at the Azores, where H——being altogether unfit for duty is left to be sent home by the American consul.

9. In New York City; it runs from the Battery north, a block from the East River. "Old gentleman": the fatherly con man who gulls greenhorns into signing on whaleships.
1. Ironic Latin phrase (which Melville also uses in Ch. 24 of *The Confidence-Man*), meaning not just smoothness or suaveness but "slickness of manner."

He never recovered from the effects of his hardships; for in the sequel Browne relates that after reaching home himself, he visited his old friend in Ohio, and found him still liable to temporary prostrations directly referable to his sufferings at sea.

With a heavy heart our author after leaving the Azores weathers the Cape of Good Hope and enters upon the Indian Ocean. The ship's company——composed mostly of ignorant, half-civilized Portuguese from the Western Islands——are incessantly quarrelling and fighting; the provisions are of the most wretched kind;——their success in the fishery is small; and to crown all, the captain himself is the very incarnation of all that is dastardly, mean, and heartless.

We cannot follow Browne through all his adventures. Suffice it to say, that heartily disgusted with his situation he at length, with great difficulty, succeeds in leaving the vessel on the coast of Zanzibar. There he tarries for some months, and his residence in this remote region (the Eastern coast of Africa, near Madagascar) enables him to make sundry curious observations upon men and things, of which the reader of his work has the benefit. From Zanzibar he ultimately sails for home in a merchant brig; and at last arrives in Boston thoroughly out of conceit of the ocean.

Give ear, now, all ye shore-disdaining, ocean-enamored youth, who labor under the lamentable delusion, that the sea—the "glorious sea" is always and in reality "the blue, the fresh, the ever free!"[2] Give ear to Mr. J. Ross Browne, and hearken unto what that experienced young gentleman has to say about the manner in which Barry Cornwall has been humbugging the rising generation on this subject.——Alas! Hereafter we shall never look upon an unsophisticated stripling in flowing "duck" trousers and a bright blue jacket,[3] loitering away the interval which elapses before sailing on his maiden cruise, without mourning over the hard fate in store for him.——In a ship's forecastle, alas, he will find no Psyche glass[4] in which to survey his picturesque attire. And the business of making his toilet will be comprised in trying to keep as dry and comfortable as the utter absence of umbrellas; wet decks, and leaky forecastles will admit of. We shudder at all realities of the career they will be entering upon. The long, dark, cold night-watches which, month after month, they must battle out the best way they can;——the ship pitching and thumping against the bullying waves—every plank dripping—every jacket soaked—and the captain not at all bland in issuing his order for the poor fellows to mount aloft in the icy sleet and howling tempest. "Bless me, Captain, go away up there this excessively disagreeable night?" "Aye, up with you, you lubber—*bare*, I say, or look out for squalls"—a figurative expression, conveying a remote allusion to the hasty application of a sea-bludgeon to the head.

Then the whaling part of the business.—My young friends, just fancy yourselves, for the first time in an open boat (so slight that three men might

2. The first line of "The Sea" (1832) by British barrister and literary man Brian Waller Proctor (1787–1874), who used the pseudonym Barry Cornwall.
3. The manuscript clearly reads "bright," not "light," as the *LW* text prints it. Mrs. Melville made the same error in copying his essay on Hawthorne, but it was caught in the fair copy and was printed correctly.
4. Large mirror in which one can see one's whole body.

walk off with it) some twelve or fifteen miles from your ship, and about a hundred times as far from the nearest land, giving chase to one of the oleaginous monsters. "Pull, pull, you lubberly *hay makers!*" cries the boat-header jumping up and down in the stem-sheets in a frenzy of professional excitement, while the gasping admirers of Captain Marryatt[5] and the sea, tug with might and main at the truckling oars—"Pull, pull, I say; break your lazy backs!" Presently the whale is within "darting distance," and you hear the roar of the waters in his wake.——How palpitating the hearts of the frightened oarsmen at this interesting juncture! My young friends, just turn round and snatch a look at that whale——. There he goes, surging through the brine, which ripples about his vast head, as if it were the bow of a ship. Believe me, it's quite as terrible as going into battle to a raw recruit.

"Stand up and give it to him!" shrieks the boat-header at the steering oar to the harpooner in the bow. The latter drops his oar, and snatches his "iron." It flies from his hands—and where are we then, my lovelies?—— It's all a mist, a crash,—a horrible blending of sounds and sights, as the agonized whale lashes the water around him into suds and vapor—dashes the boat aside, and at last rushes, madly, through the water, towing after him the half-filled craft which rocks from side to side while the disordered crew, clutch at the gunwale to avoid being tossed out. Meanwhile all sorts of horrific edged tools—lances, harpoons, and spades——are slipping about; and the imminent line itself—smoking round the logger-head and passing along the entire length of the boat—is almost death to handle, though it grazes your person.

But all this is nothing to what follows. As yet you have but simply *fastened* to the whale: he must be fought and killed. But let imagination supply the rest——the monster staving the boat with a single sweep of his ponderous flukes;——taking its bows between his jaws (as is frequently the case) and playing with it as a cat with a mouse. Sometimes he bites it in twain; sometimes crunches it into chips, and strews the sea with them.——

But we forbear. Enough has been said to convince the uninitiated what sort of a vocation whaling in truth is. If further information is desired, Mr. Browne's book is purchasable in which they will find the whole matter described in all its interesting details.

After reading the "Etchings of a Whaling Cruise" a perusal of "Sailors' Life and Sailors' Yarns" is, in one respect at least, like hearing "the other side of the question." For, while Browne's is a "Voice from the Forecastle" Captain Ringbolt hails us from the quarter deck, the other end of the ship. Browne gives us a sailor's version of sailors' wrongs, and is not altogether free from prejudices acquired during his little experience on ship board; Captain Ringbolt almost denies that the sailor has any wrongs, and more than insinuates that sea-captains are not only the best natured fellows in the world, but that they have been sorely maligned. Indeed, he explicitly charges Mr. Dana and Mr. Browne with having presented a decidedly one sided view of the matter. And he manfully exclaims that the Captain of

5. Captain Frederick Marryat (1792–1848), British author of *Peter Simple* (1834) and other popular novels of sea adventure. In *Typee*, Ch. 4, Melville jokes that "long-haired, bare-necked youths, who, forced by the united influences of Captain Marryat and hard times, embark at Nantucket for a pleasure excursion to the Pacific, and whose anxious mothers provide them with bottled milk for the occasion, oftentimes return very respectable middle-aged gentlemen."

the Pilgrim[6]—poor fellow!—died too soon to vindicate his character from unjust aspersions. Now as a class ship owners are seldom disposed partially to judge the captains in their employ. And yet we know of a verity, that at least one of the owners of the Pilgrim,——an esteemed citizen of the good old town of Boston, will never venture to dispute that to the extent of his knowledge at least Mr. Dana's captain was a most "strict and harsh disciplinarian" which words so applied by a ship owner,[7] mean that the man in question was nothing less than what Mr. Dana describes him to have been.——But where is Browne's captain? He is alive and hearty we presume. Let him come forward then and show why he ought not to be regarded in the decidedly unfavorable light in which he is held up to us in the narrative we have noticed. Now for aught we know to the contrary this same captain of the Styx, who was such a heartless, domineering tyrant at sea, may be quite a different character ashore. In truth we think this very probable. For the god Janus[8] never had two more decidedly different faces than your sea captain. Ashore his Nautical Highness has nothing to ruffle him,——friends grasp him by the hand, and are overjoyed to see him after his long absence——he is invited out, relates his adventures pleasantly, and everybody thinks what lucky dogs his sailors must have been to have sailed with such a capital fellow.——But let poor Jack have a word to say. Why, sir, he will tell you that when they embarked, his Nautical Highness left behind him all his "quips and cranks and wreathed smiles."[9] Very far indeed is the Captain from cracking any of his jokes with his crew—that would be altogether too condescending. But then there is no reason why he should bestow a curse every time he gives an order—there is no reason why he should never say a word of sympathy to his men.[1] True in this respect all sea captains are not alike; but still——there is enough truth in both Mr. Dana's and Mr. Browne's statements to justify nearly to the full, the general conclusions to be drawn from what they have said on this subject.——

But Captain Ringbolt's book is very far from being a mere plea for the class to which he belongs.——What he has to say upon the matter is chiefly contained in one brief sketch under the head of "Sailor's Rights and Sailor's Wrongs."——The rest of the book is made up of little stories of the sea, simply and pleasantly told and withal entertaining.

6. The name of Dana's ship.
7. Unidentified, but Melville at this time had social access to wealthy Bostonians through his father-in-law, the chief justice of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.
8. The Roman god with faces on front and rear of his head.
9. An adaptation of lines 27–28 of Milton's "L'Allegro": "Quips, and Cranks, and wanton Wiles, / Nods, and Becks, and wreathed Smiles."
1. In the manuscript there is a space between "of" and "sympathy" that is partly filled by what appears to be "h n"; there is at least a chance that Melville meant to write "of human sympathy" and simply did not notice that his pen did not work properly. By this point in the manuscript Melville's handwriting has greatly deteriorated.

Self-portrait of the tattooed face of Tupai Cupa, whose story Melville found in George Lillie Craik's *The New Zealanders* (London: Charles Knight, 1830), and on whom he based Queequeg—a discovery by Geoffrey Sanborn first announced in the previous Norton Critical Edition.

HERSHEL PARKER

Moby-Dick and Melville's Notes in His Shakespeare†

Melville made pencil notes on both sides of the free endpaper at the back of the last volume of his seven-volume *The Dramatic Works of William Shakspeare* (Boston: Hilliard, Gray, 1837); his set is now at Houghton Library. (The Hilliard, Gray edition uses the spelling *Shakspeare* in its title and throughout.) The young poet Charles Olson read the notes while they were in the possession of Melville's granddaughter Frances Osborne and made his transcriptions (and mistranscriptions) the pivot of his famous 1947 book, *Call me Ishmael*.

The notes, we now know, come from three sources. They are all reading notes, sometimes combined with literary planning notes. In each instance Melville presumably had borrowed a book and desired to take notes on it while it was in his possession.

In December 2007, during the preparation of the Northwestern-Newberry volume of Melville's *Published Poems,* the contributing scholar to that edition, Scott Norsworthy, discovered that the first set of notes Melville inscribed, those at the top of the verso, lines 1–11, were from a series of essays by Leigh Hunt that were first published in the early 1820s in his short-lived London journal, *The Indicator*, and reprinted in *Essays* (London: Edward Moxon, 1841). As happens more and more frequently when researchers use the Internet, Geoffrey Sanborn also found the source and reported it in "Lounging on the Sofa with Leigh Hunt: A New Source for the Notes in Melville's Shakespeare Volume," *Nineteenth-Century Literature* 63 (June 2008): 104–15. Melville's friend Evert A. Duyckinck had in his library an American edition, Leigh Hunt's *The Indicator: A Miscellany for the Fields and Fireside* (New York: Wiley & Putnam, 1845).

In September 2007, Norsworthy had discovered the source of the second set of notes Melville made, the middle set beginning with the citation of Cain, Reuben, and Absalom (verso 12–30). The notes were from the first volume of Thomas Roscoe's four-volume *The German Novelists* (London: Henry Colburn, 1826).[1]

The group of notes starting on the recto on the second line are by far the most famous notes Melville ever made, much debated ever since Charles Olson used the group in his "*Lear* and *Moby-Dick*," *Twice a Year* I (fall–winter, 1938): 165–89. What Olson focused on, and what most intrigued generations of Melville scholars, was the inverted Latin baptismal formula *in nomine diaboli* (in the name of the devil), which Ahab uses in *Moby-Dick* and which Melville in the June 29, 1851, letter to Nathaniel Hawthorne declared to be that book's secret motto. In "The Name of the Devil: Melville's Other 'Extracts' for *Moby-Dick*," *Nineteenth-Century Literature* 47 (September 1992): 212–35, Geoffrey Sanborn published his discovery that those notes are from "Superstition and Knowledge"

† Written and compiled by the editor for this edition.

1. Norsworthy reported his discovery of the source for the middle group of notes (including a single sentence later identified by Parker) in "Melville's Notes on Thomas Roscoe's *The German Novelists*," *Leviathan* 10.3 (October 2008), Special Issue: Melville's Sources II.

(unsigned but by Francis Palgrave) in the July 1823 London *Quarterly Review*. It is this source that directly relates to *Moby-Dick*.

Here are quotations from "Superstition and Knowledge" followed by Melville's notes.

Quarterly Review 444: Palgrave quotes from a Scottish town's expenses in 1633 of £3.6s.8d. for "ten loads of coals *to burn them*" (i.e., to burn William Coke and Alison Dick).

Melville: Ten loads of coal to burn him.—

Quarterly Review 446 (On the "last execution of a Scottish witch," a grandmother executed at Dornock in 1722): "After being brought out for execution, the weather proving very severe, the poor old woman sat composedly before the pile, warming herself by the fire prepared to consume her."

Melville: Brought to the stake—warmed himself by the fire.

Quarterly Review 447: "Upwards of six hundred women were executed in the bishopric of Bamberg alone. The accusations bear the stamp of raving madness. Priests were convicted of baptising in the following form: Ego non baptizo te in nomine Patris et Filii et Spiritus Sancti—sed in nomine Diaboli."

Melville: Ego non baptizo te in nominee Patris et Filii et Spiritus Sancti—sed in nomine Diaboli.—

Quarterly Review 449: "Madness is almost undefinable. Right reason and insanity are merely the extreme terms of a series of mental action, which need not be very long."

Melville: Madness is undefinable—It & right reasons extremes of one.

Quarterly Review 452–453: "The doctrine delivered at Simancas, however, was not Goetic Magic, or that which is vulgarly termed the Black Art, but the high and pure Theurgy which repels all converse with the evil demon. Theurgical magic, the magic which seeks its converse with the Power, the Intelligence, and the Angel, might have been first diffused in Spain by the sectaries of the Gnostic doctrines, who appear to have found numerous adherents in that country during many centuries.

Melville—Not the (black art) Goetic but Theurgic magic—seeks converse with the Intelligence, Power, the Angel [The words in parentheses are Melville's insertion above the line.]

HERMAN MELVILLE

Hawthorne and His *Mosses*: By a Virginian Spending July in Vermont†

Melville's revisions in the manuscript show he added this fictional pseudonymous Virginian, here and in all five later passages, after he had written most of the essay expressing his own fervent feelings, which he thus distanced himself from, advised by Evert Duyckinck, editor of the New York *Literary*

† *The Literary World* (August 17 and 24, 1850). The "Mosses" is Nathaniel Hawthorne's 1846 collection of short stories, *Mosses from an Old Manse*.

World, who had a hand in other revisions and who published it anonymously. Still other things told in the essay are not true, including the assertion that it was written before the author met Hawthorne, that the book was given to him by a "Cousin Cherry" (his Aunt Mary Ann Melvill, widow of his Uncle Thomas, gave it to him on July 18, knowing he might meet Hawthorne on his vacation at Pittsfield), and that it was "verdantly bound" and had green Salem moss pressed to the flyleaf.

This is a slightly regularized reading text, transcribed by Harrison Hayford and Hershel Parker. The punctuation is that of the manuscript in the Duyckinck Collection of the New York Public Library. It is mainly in Elizabeth Melville's hand, copied from her husband's hastily scrawled draft. Several of the footnotes explain the difficulties Elizabeth Melville had in copying the original manuscript and just how Duyckinck censored what Melville had written. Melville had no chance to correct proofs and found "ugly errors" in the printed essay, but listed only one. The footnotes about the errors in the text and emendations are designed to complement the discussions elsewhere of emendations in the text of *Moby-Dick*.

The most detailed narrative account of the composition of this essay and the aftermath, drawing on the papers of Melville's sister Augusta (acquired by the New York Public Library in 1983), is in the first volume of Hershel Parker's *Herman Melville: A Biography* (1996), Ch. 36, "Hawthorne and His *Mosses:* 8 August–September 1850."

A papered chamber in a fine old farm-house—a mile from any other dwelling, and dipped to the eaves in foliage—surrounded by mountains, old woods, and Indian ponds,—this, surely, is the place to write of Hawthorne. Some charm is in this northern air, for love and duty seem both impelling to the task. A man of a deep and noble nature has seized me in this seclusion. His wild, witch voice rings through me; or, in softer cadences, I seem to hear it in the songs of the hill-side birds, that sing in the larch trees at my window.

Would that all excellent books were foundlings, without father or mother, that so it might be, we could glorify them, without including their ostensible authors. Nor would any true man take exception to this;—least of all, he who writes,—"When the Artist rises high enough to achieve the Beautiful, the symbol by which he makes it perceptible to mortal senses becomes of little value in his eyes, while his spirit possesses itself in the enjoyment of the reality."

But more than this. I know not what would be the right name to put on the title-page of an excellent book, but this I feel, that the names of all fine authors are fictitious ones, far more so than that of Junius,[1]—simply standing, as they do for the mystical, ever-eluding Spirit of all Beauty, which ubiquitously possesses men of genius. Purely imaginative as this fancy may appear, it nevertheless seems to receive some warranty from the fact, that on a personal interview no great author has ever come up to the idea of his reader. But that dust of which our bodies are composed, how can it fitly express the nobler intelligences among us? With reverence be it spoken, that not even in the case of one deemed more than man, not even in our Saviour, did his visible frame betoken anything of the

1. Pseudonym of an unidentified British author of famous political satires (1769–72), now thought to have been Sir Philip Francis.

augustness of the nature within. Else, how could those Jewish eyewitnesses fail to see heaven in his glance.

It is curious, how a man may travel along a country road, and yet miss the grandest, or sweetest of prospects, by reason of an intervening hedge, so like all other hedges, as in no way to hint of the wide landscape beyond. So has it been with me concerning the enchanting landscape in the soul of this Hawthorne, this most excellent Man of Mosses. His "Old Manse" has been written now four years, but I never read it till a day or two since. I had seen it in the book-stores—heard of it often—even had it recommended to me by a tasteful friend, as a rare, quiet book, perhaps too deserving of popularity to be popular. But there are so many books called "excellent," and so much unpopular merit, that amid the thick stir of other things, the hint of my tasteful friend was disregarded; and for four years the Mosses on the Old Manse never refreshed me with their perennial green. It may be, however, that all this while, the book, like wine,[2] was only improving in flavor and body. At any rate, it so chanced that this long procrastination eventuated in a happy result. At breakfast the other day, a mountain girl, a cousin of mine, who for the last two weeks has every morning helped me to strawberries and raspberries,—which, like the roses and pearls in the fairy-tale, seemed to fall into the saucer from those strawberry-beds her cheeks,—this delightful creature, this charming Cherry says to me—"I see you spend your mornings in the hay-mow; and yesterday I found there 'Dwight's Travels in New England'.[3] Now I have something far better than that,—something more congenial to our summer on these hills. Take these raspberries, and then I will give you some moss."—"Moss!" said I.—"Yes, and you must take it to the barn with you, and good-bye to 'Dwight.'"

With that she left me, and soon returned with a volume, verdantly bound, and garnished with a curious frontispiece in green,—nothing less, than a fragment of real moss cunningly pressed to a fly-leaf.—"Why this," said I, spilling my raspberries, "this is the 'Mosses from an Old Manse'." "Yes," said cousin Cherry, "yes, it is that flowery Hawthorne."—"Hawthorne and Mosses," said I, "no more: it is morning: it is July in the country: and I am off for the barn."

Stretched on that new mown clover, the hill-side breeze blowing over me through the wide barn door, and soothed by the hum of the bees in the meadows around, how magically stole over me this Mossy Man! And how amply, how bountifully, did he redeem that delicious promise to his guests in the Old Manse, of whom it is written[4]—"Others could give them pleasure, or amusement, or instruction—these could be picked up anywhere—but it was for me to give them rest. Rest, in a life of trouble!

2. Misprinted in *LW* as "likewise."
3. *Travels in New-England and New-York*, 4 vols. (1821–22), by Timothy Dwight (1752–1817).
4. During the composition of *Mardi* (see *Log*, 276), Mrs. Melville in a letter to her stepmother apologized for perhaps having left out punctuation marks, explaining that as Herman's copyist she was in the habit of leaving all the punctuation for him to supply. This passage (4.2–4.8 in the manuscript) is clear proof that in 1850 she was still omitting punctuation. In Melville's hand, in different ink, are the following additions and changes: he added the comma after "clover"; he altered "with the hill side breeze blowing over me from the wide barn door" to "the hill-side breeze blowing over me thro' the wide barn door," (Melville's comma); he added a comma after "around"; he mended the "M's" in "mossy man" to capitals; he added an exclamation point after "Man" and commas after "amply" and "bountifully"; and he changed "old manse" to "Old Manse." Presumably the extraordinary absence of necessary periods and quotation marks in the first American edition of *Mardi* is due to Melville's failure to add the punctuation, and certain unusual absences of commas in *Moby-Dick* may be due to the same cause.

What better could be done for weary and world-worn spirits? what better could be done for anybody, who came within our magic circle, than to throw the spell of a magic spirit over him?"—So all that day, half-buried in the new clover, I watched this Hawthorne's "Assyrian dawn, and Paphian sunset and moonrise, from the summit of our Eastern Hill."[5]

The soft ravishments of the man spun me round about in a web of dreams, and when the book was closed, when the spell was over, this wizard "dismissed me with but misty reminiscences, as if I had been dreaming of him."

What a mild[6] moonlight of contemplative humor bathes that Old Manse!—the rich and rare distilment of a spicy and slowly-oozing heart. No rollicking rudeness, no gross fun fed on fat dinners, and bred in the lees of wine,—but a humor so spiritually gentle, so high, so deep, and yet so richly relishable, that it were hardly inappropriate in an angel. It is the very religion of mirth; for nothing so human but it may be advanced to that. The orchard of the Old Manse seems the visible type of the fine mind that has described it. Those twisted, and contorted old trees, "that stretch out their crooked branches, and take such hold of the imagination, that we remember them as humorists and odd-fellows." And then, as surrounded by these grotesque forms, and hushed in the noon-day repose of this Hawthorne's spell, how aptly might the still fall of his ruddy thoughts into your soul be symbolized by "the thump of a great apple, in the stillest afternoon, falling without a breath of wind, from the mere necessity of perfect ripeness"! For no less ripe than ruddy are the apples of the thoughts and fancies in this sweet Man of Mosses.

"Buds and Bird-Voices"—What a delicious thing is that!—"Will the world ever be so decayed, that Spring may not renew its greenness?"—And the "Fire-Worship." Was ever the hearth so glorified into an altar before? The mere title of that piece is better than any common work in fifty folio volumes. How exquisite is this:—"Nor did it lessen the charm of his soft, familiar courtesy and helpfulness, that the mighty spirit, were opportunity offered him, would run riot through the peaceful house, wrap its inmates in his terrible embrace, and leave nothing of them save their whitened bones. This possibility of mad destruction only made his domestic kindness the more beautiful and touching. It was so sweet of him, being endowed with such power, to dwell, day after day, and one long, lonesome night after

5. The quotations here and in the next two paragraphs are from the introductory essay, "The Old Manse," about the Hawthornes' happy early married years in Concord, Massachusetts (1842–46). The second quotation is from the description of the "little nook of a study" where Emerson, while living there, wrote "Nature" (1836) and, as he wrote in that book, "used to watch the Assyrian dawn and the Paphian sunset and moonrise, from the summit of our eastern hill." Melville may not have recognized that Hawthorne was paraphrasing Emerson's words.

6. Misprinted in *LW* as "wild," as misread by Mrs. Melville. Parker in the 1970s in Los Angeles realized from the context that "wild" was wrong, and Hayford later verified the surmise by recourse to the manuscript in the Duyckinck Collection at the New York Public Library (NYPL). In the 1990s Parker at the NYPL saw that for decades we had been misled about Hawthorne's response to meeting Melville at the picnic on Monument Mountain on August 5, 1850, because the available texts of Evert Duyckinck's record had Hawthorne looking "mildly" about. In fact, Duyckinck wrote "wildly": "The rain did not do its worst and we scattered over the cliffs, Herman Melville to seat himself, the boldest of all, astride a projecting bow sprit of rock while little Dr Holmes peeped about the cliffs and protested it affected him like ipecac. Hawthorne looked wildly about for the great Carbuncle" (an allusion to one of his own early stories). Excited by meeting the man he thought he knew intimately from reading and reviewing *Typee* in 1846, Hawthorne had been hamming it up in a humorous theatricality that those who knew him found uncharacteristic and that Melville found charming. Here one letter of one word makes a big difference.

another, on the dusky hearth, only now and then betraying his wild nature, by thrusting his red tongue out of the chimney-top! True, he had done much mischief in the world, and was pretty certain to do more, but his warm heart atoned for all. He was kindly to the race of man."

But he has still other apples, not quite so ruddy, though full as ripe:—apples, that have been left to wither on the tree, after the pleasant autumn gathering is past. The sketch of "The Old Apple Dealer" is conceived in the subtlest spirit of sadness; he whose "subdued and nerveless boyhood prefigured his abortive prime, which, likewise, contained within itself the prophecy and image of his lean and torpid age." Such touches as are in this piece can not proceed from any common heart.[7] They argue such a depth of tenderness, such a boundless sympathy with all forms of being, such an omnipresent love, that we must needs say, that this Hawthorne is here almost alone in his generation,—at least, in the artistic manifestation of these things. Still more. Such touches as these,—and many, very many similar ones, all through his chapters—furnish clews, whereby we enter a little way into the intricate, profound heart where they originated. And we see, that suffering, some time or other and in some shape or other,—this only can enable any man to depict it in others. All over him, Hawthorne's melancholy rests like an Indian Summer, which, though bathing a whole country in one softness, still reveals the distinctive hue of every towering hill, and each far-winding vale.

But it is the least part of genius that attracts admiration. Where Hawthorne is known, he seems to be deemed a pleasant writer, with a pleasant style,—a sequestered, harmless man, from whom any deep and weighty thing would hardly be anticipated:—a man who means no meanings. But there is no man, in whom humor and love, like mountain peaks, soar to such a rapt height, as to receive the irradiations of the upper skies;—there is no man in whom humor and love are developed in that high form called genius; no such man can exist without also possessing, as the indispensable complement of these, a great, deep intellect, which drops down into the universe like a plummet.[8] Or, love and humor are only the eyes, through which such an intellect views this world. The great beauty in such a mind is but the product of its strength. What, to all readers, can be more charming than the piece entitled "Monsieur du Miroir"; and to a reader at all capable of fully fathoming it, what, at the same time, can possess more mystical depth of meaning?—Yes, there he sits, and looks at me,—this "shape of mystery," this "identical Monsieur

7. The first part of this sentence occurs on 6.22 of the manuscript. In the left margin is a small penciled "X"—erased, but still visible. An examination of the whole manuscript reveals that such marginal X's were Mrs. Melville's way of reminding herself that she was uncertain about what she had copied and that she would have to ask her husband for the correct reading. After she had checked with him, she would erase the X—but lightly enough so that most are still readily visible. Here she first copied "Such tones as are in this piece," and later inserted the correct word, "touches," above "tones." Often enough in the manuscript inserted words are simply revisions of Melville's, but frequently, as here, the reading Mrs. Melville first copied can never have been what Melville wrote.
8. At 7.21 in the manuscript Mrs. Melville copied "into the universe like a planet"; she later marked out "planet" and inserted the correct "plummet" above it. Here no X is visible in the margin, perhaps an indication that she had not questioned her reading. It is not clear why the correction is in her hand instead of Melville's: perhaps she simply caught the error herself later, and corrected it, as she did at other points; perhaps she was reading her copy aloud to him to spare his eyes and making the changes herself; perhaps he was proofreading with her nearby to enter any corrections.

du Miroir."—"Methinks I should tremble now, were his wizard power of gliding through all impediments in search of me, to place him suddenly before my eyes."

How profound, nay appalling, is the moral evolved by the "Earth's Holocaust"; where—beginning with the hollow follies and affectations of the world,—all vanities and empty theories and forms, are, one after another, and by an admirably graduated, growing comprehensiveness, thrown into the allegorical fire, till, at length, nothing is left but the all-engendering heart of man; which remaining still unconsumed, the great conflagration is naught.

Of a piece with this, is the "Intelligence Office," a wondrous symbolizing of the secret workings in men's souls.[9] There are other sketches, still more charged with ponderous import.

"The Christmas Banquet," and "The Bosom Serpent" would be fine subjects for a curious and elaborate analysis, touching the conjectural parts of the mind that produced them. For spite of all the Indian-summer sunlight on the hither side of Hawthorne's soul,[1] the other side—like the dark half of the physical sphere—is shrouded in a blackness, ten times black. But this darkness but gives more effect to the evermoving dawn, that forever advances through it, and circumnavigates his world.[2] Whether Hawthorne has simply availed himself of this mystical blackness as a means to the wondrous effects he makes it to produce in his lights and shades; or whether there really lurks in him, perhaps unknown to himself, a touch of Puritanic gloom,—this, I cannot altogether tell. Certain it is, however, that this great power of blackness in him derives its force from its appeals to that Calvinistic sense of Innate Depravity and Original Sin, from whose visitations, in some shape or other, no deeply thinking mind is always and wholly free. For, in certain moods, no man can weigh this world, without throwing in something, somehow like Original Sin, to strike the uneven balance. At all events, perhaps no writer has ever wielded this terrific thought with greater terror than this same harmless Hawthorne. Still more: this black conceit pervades him, through and through. You may be witched by his sunlight,—transported by the bright gildings in the skies he builds over you;—but there is the blackness of darkness beyond; and even his bright gildings but fringe, and play upon the edges of thunder-clouds.—In one word, the world is mistaken in this Nathaniel Hawthorne. He himself must often have smiled at its absurd misconception of him. He is immeasurably deeper than the plummet of the mere

9. In the manuscript 8.14 reads "of secret workings in this world. There are" (in Mrs. Melville's hand); in Melville's hand "the" is inserted before "secret," and "this world" is altered to "men's souls." Mrs. Melville evidently did not suspect she had miscopied, for no X is visible in the margin.

1. In this sentence at 8.20 in the manuscript is a clear instance of Mrs. Melville's misreading Melville's "on" as "in": She copied the passage as "sunlight in the hither side of Hawthorne's soul," and Melville mended the "in" to "on," which must have been the original reading.

2. At 8.25 in the manuscript Mrs. Melville left two blanks: "that forever through it, and ." Later, presumably after consulting her husband, she added "advances" in the first space and "circumnavigates" in the second. It is almost always easy to detect which words have been added later by the unusual spacing and the anomalous slanting of the added word. In *Moby-Dick* there are instances of Melville's adding words in the English edition that seem likely to have been in his manuscript, though they do not appear in the first American edition. It may be that sometimes any blanks left by the copyist (Melville's sister Augusta for most of *Moby-Dick*) simply never got detected and filled in, despite any symbol like Mrs. Melville's X.

critic. For it is not the brain[3] that can test such a man; it is only the heart. You cannot come to know greatness by inspecting it; there is no glimpse to be caught of it, except by intuition; you need not ring it, you but touch it, and you find it is gold.[4]

Now it is that blackness in Hawthorne, of which I have spoken, that so fixes and fascinates me. It may be, nevertheless, that it is too largely developed in him. Perhaps he does not give us a ray of his light for every shade of his dark. But however this may be, this blackness it is that furnishes the infinite obscure of his background,—that background, against which Shakespeare plays his grandest conceits, the things that have made for Shakespeare his loftiest, but most circumscribed renown, as the profoundest of thinkers. For by philosophers Shakespeare is not adored as the great man of tragedy and comedy.—"Off with his head! so much for Buckingham!"[5] this sort of rant, interlined by another hand, brings down the house,—those mistaken souls, who dream of Shakespeare as a mere man of Richard-the-Third humps, and Macbeth daggers. But it is those deep far-away things in him; those occasional flashings-forth of the intuitive Truth in him; those short, quick probings at the very axis of reality:—these are the things that make Shakespeare, Shakespeare. Through the mouths of the dark characters[6] of Hamlet, Timon, Lear, and Iago, he craftily says, or sometimes insinuates the things, which we feel to be so terrifically true, that it were all but madness for any good man, in his own proper character, to utter, or even hint of them. Tormented into desperation, Lear the frantic King tears off the mask, and speaks the sane madness of vital truth.[7] But, as I before said, it is the least part of genius that attracts admiration. And so, much of the blind, unbridled admiration that has been heaped upon Shakespeare, has been lavished upon the least part of him. And few of his endless commentators and critics seem to have remembered, or even perceived, that the immediate products of a great mind are not so great, as that undeveloped, (and sometimes undevelopable) yet dimly-discernible[8] greatness, to which these immediate products are but the infallible indices. In Shakespeare's tomb lies infinitely more than Shakespeare ever wrote. And if I magnify Shakespeare, it is not so much for what he did do, as for what

3. At 9.23 in the manuscript a word clearly baffled Mrs. Melville. She put an X in the margin, and left a blank, in which she later inserted the word "brain."
4. At 9.27 in the manuscript is a clear instance of Mrs. Melville's omitting words that Melville restored as he proofread her copy. She copied "you ring it you but touch it and you find"; he later inserted "need not" before "ring" and added a comma after both the first and the second "it."
5. At 10.12–13 in the manuscript Mrs. Melville copied "Buckingham" [these close quotes are in the manuscript] this sort of rant introduced by some other hand bring down the house those." Melville crowded in an exclamation point between "Buckingham" and the following double quotes, added a comma after "rant," inserted "interlined" in place of "introduced," marked out "some" and altered "other" to "another," added a comma after "hand," added (or traced over) the S in "brings," and added a comma-dash after "house," but no separating punctuation before "this."
6. At 10.21 in the manuscript Mrs. Melville copied "Though the issues of the dark characters"; in Melville's hand "issues" is marked out and replaced with "mouths" (with no doubtful "X" in the margin).
7. In October Sophia Hawthorne wrote to her sister Elizabeth Peabody: "He [Melville] told me that the Review was too carelessly written—that he dashed it off in great haste & did not see the proof sheets, & that there was one provoking mistake in it. Instead of 'the same madness of truth' it should be "the *sane* madness of truth."
8. At 11.7 in the manuscript Mrs. Melville copied "divinely" then at once realized her error, marked out "divinely" and on the same line added "dimly-discerned" (which Melville later altered to "dimly-discernable"—a misspelling corrected in LW).

he did not do, or refrained from doing. For in this world of lies, Truth is forced to fly like a sacred[9] white doe in the woodlands; and only by cunning glimpses will she reveal herself, as in Shakespeare and other masters[1] of the great Art of Telling the Truth,—even though it be covertly, and by snatches.[2]

But if this view of the all-popular Shakespeare be seldom taken by his readers, and if very few who extol him, have ever read him deeply, or, perhaps, only have seen him on the tricky stage, (which alone made, and is still making him his mere mob renown)—if few men have time, or patience, or palate, for the spiritual truth as it is in that great genius;—it is, then, no matter of surprise that in a contemporaneous age, Nathaniel Hawthorne is a man, as yet, almost utterly mistaken among men. Here and there, in some quiet arm-chair in the noisy town, or some deep nook among the noiseless mountains, he may be appreciated for something of what he is. But unlike Shakespeare, who was forced to the contrary course by circumstances, Hawthorne (either from simple disinclination, or else from inaptitude) refrains from all the popularizing noise and show of broad farce, and blood-besmeared tragedy; content with the still, rich utterances of a great intellect in repose, and which sends few thoughts into circulation, except they be arterialized at his large warm lungs, and expanded in his honest heart.

Nor need you fix upon that blackness in him, if it suit you not. Nor, indeed, will all readers discern it, for it is, mostly, insinuated to those who may best understand it, and account for it; it is not obtruded upon every one alike.

Some may start to read of Shakespeare and Hawthorne on the same page. They may say, that if an illustration were needed, a lesser light might have sufficed to elucidate this Hawthorne, this small man of yesterday. But I am not, willingly, one of those, who, as touching Shakespeare at least, exemplify the maxim of Rochefoucauld,[3] that "we exalt the reputation of some, in order to depress that of others";—who, to teach all noble-souled aspirants that there is no hope for them, pronounce Shakespeare absolutely unapproachable. But Shakespeare has been approached. There are minds that have gone as far as Shakespeare into the universe. And hardly a mortal man, who, at some time or other, has not felt as great thoughts in him as any you will find in Hamlet. We must not inferentially malign mankind for the sake of any one man, whoever he may be. This is too cheap a purchase of contentment for conscious mediocrity to make. Besides, this absolute and unconditional adoration of Shakespeare has grown to be a part of our Anglo Saxon superstitions. The Thirty-Nine Articles are now

9. Mrs. Melville wrote "scared." In *Herman Melville: A Biography* (I. 756) Parker introduced the emendation of "sacred white doe" instead of "scared white doe" on the analogy of John Dryden's "milk-white Hind" in "The Hind and the Panther" (1687) and William Wordsworth's "White Doe of Rylstone" (1807). In the third paragraph of Ch. 42 of *Moby-Dick,* "The Whiteness of the Whale," see the passage on the "sacred White Dog" of the Iroquois. At 11.12 in the manuscript Mrs. Melville copied "Truth is found" and recorded her doubt with an X in the margin. Later she marked out "found" and inserted "forced."
1. Melville himself added a comma after "herself" (line 11.15) and altered the impossible reading "other writers" to "other masters" (there is no X at this point to indicate Mrs. Melville was uncertain about what she copied).
2. In 11.16 Melville altered "art" to "Art" and inserted a comma-dash after "Truth." In the following line he inserted a comma after "covertly," even though it had to be crowded in.
3. Francois de la Rochefoucauld (1613–1680), French author noted for the dim view of human nature in his *Moral Reflections & Maxims*.

Forty.[4] Intolerance has come to exist in this matter. You must believe in Shakespeare's unapproachability, or quit the country. But what sort of a belief is this for an American, a man who is bound to carry republican progressiveness into Literature, as well as into Life? Believe me, my friends, that men not very much inferior to Shakespeare, are this day being born on the banks of the Ohio.[5] And the day will come, when you shall say who reads a book by an Englishman that is a modern?[6] The great mistake seems to be, that even with those Americans who look forward to the coming of a great literary genius among us, they somehow fancy he will come in the costume of Queen Elizabeth's day,—be a writer of dramas founded upon old English history, or the tales of Boccaccio. Whereas, great geniuses are parts of the times; they themselves are the times; and possess a correspondent coloring. It is of a piece with the Jews, who while their Shiloh was meekly walking in their streets, were still praying for his magnificent coming; looking for him in a chariot, who was already among them on an ass. Nor must we forget, that, in his own life-time, Shakespeare was not Shakespeare, but only Master William Shakespeare of the shrewd, thriving business firm of Condell, Shakespeare & Co., proprietors of the Globe Theatre in London; and by a courtly author, of the name of Greene,[7] was hooted at, as an "upstart crow" beautified "with other birds' feathers." For, mark it well, imitation is often the first charge brought against real originality. Why this is so, there is not space to set forth here. You must have plenty of searoom to tell the Truth in; especially, when it seems to have an aspect of newness, as America did in 1492, though it was then just as old, and perhaps older than Asia, only those sagacious philosophers, the common sailors, had never seen it before; swearing it was all water and moonshine there.

Now, I do not say that Nathaniel of Salem is a greater than William of Avon, or as great. But the difference between the two men is by no means

4. The Church of England's Articles of Faith issued in 1551 and 1553, acceptance of which is obligatory for its clergy. The phrase came to refer to any such basic list of beliefs.
5. Duyckinck toned this down to "that men not very much inferior to Shakespeare are being born on the banks of the Ohio." See Parker (I. 757) for an analysis of the way Melville was characteristically twisting the words of his unnamed source, here Maurice Morgann, famous in late-18th-century London for his "Essay on the Dramatic Character of Sir John Falstaff," in which he celebrates the majesty of Shakespeare's language by saying that Shakespeare's words would resound in the Appalacian mountains and on "the banks of the *Ohio*," long after Shakespeare's critics and editors and Voltaire and the very French language had been forgotten. Melville knew as he wrote that a man capable of writing a mighty book in the tradition of Shakespeare, had been born in the United States three decades earlier a stone's throw from a great bay and two rivers, the East and the Hudson.
6. A reversal of the contemptuous putdown of American works by the Scottish critic Sydney Smith (1771–1845) in the *Edinburgh Review* (January 1820): "In the four quarters of the globe, who reads an American book? Or goes to an American play? Or looks at an American picture or statue?" In the next decades American critics and writers contested this dismissal of their literature. Here, by praising Hawthorne, Melville prepares for recognition of the greatness of his whaling book then in progress.
7. Melville's manuscript has "Chettle" here. It was not the publisher Henry Chettle but the playwright Robert Greene who, in *A Groatsworth of Wit* (1592) thus maligned the young Shakespeare. However, Melville's writing "Chettle" is not a simple error (see Parker 1.705, 739, 758). In Thomas Powell's *Living Authors of America* (1850) Melville had read in the chapter on Henry Wadsworth Longfellow a theory of literary influence: "Imitation has been charged on all poets, and we know that the indignation of Robert Green[e] was so soured by the appropriations of Shakspeare, that he denounced him 'as a jay strutting about in our feathers, and fancying himself as the only *Shakscene* of the country.' This charge is always more or less true of a young author, and it is in the very nature of things." Every poet, Powell had concluded, "commences with more or less of some predominant mind, the most assimilant to his own." Melville also knew John Payne Collier's edition of Shakespeare that contained a "Life," in which Paine enunciated the theory that Chettle was the author of *A Groatsworth of Wit,* a theory that Melville may have accepted and combined with Powell's ideas about originality and imitation. Like Powell, Melville is careless with the epithet in *Groatsworth:* "an upstart crow, beautified with our feathers."

immeasurable. Not a very great deal more, and Nathaniel were verily William.

This, too, I mean, that if Shakespeare has not been equalled, give the world time, and he is sure to be surpassed, in one hemisphere or the other. Nor will it at all do to say, that the world is getting grey and grizzled now, and has lost that fresh charm which she wore of old, and by virtue of which the great poets of past times made themselves what we esteem them to be. Not so. The world is as young today, as when it was created; and this Vermont morning dew is as wet to my feet, as Eden's dew to Adam's. Nor has Nature been all over ransacked by our progenitors, so that no new charms and mysteries remain for this latter generation to find. Far from it. The trillionth[8] part has not yet been said; and all that has been said, but multiplies the avenues to what remains to be said. It is not so much paucity, as superabundance of material that seems to incapacitate modern authors.

Let America then prize and cherish her writers; yea, let her glorify them. They are not so many in number, as to exhaust her good-will. And while she has good kith and kin of her own, to take to her bosom, let her not lavish her embraces upon the household of an alien. For believe it or not England, after all, is, in many things, an alien to us. China has more bowels[9] of real love for us than she. But even were there no Hawthorne no Emerson no Whittier, no Irving, no Bryant, no Dana no Cooper no Willis (not the author of the "Dashes", but the author of the "Belfry Pigeon")—were there none of these, and others of like calibre among us, nevertheless, let America first praise mediocrity even, in her own children, before she praises (for everywhere, merit demands acknowledgment from every one) the best excellence in the children of any other land.[1] Let her own authors, I say, have the priority of appreciation. I was much pleased with a hot-headed Carolina cousin of mine, who once said,—"If there were no other American to stand by, in Literature,—why, then, I would stand by Pop Eminons and his 'Fredoniad,'[2] and till a better epic came along, swear it was not very far behind the 'Iliad'." Take away the words, and in spirit he was sound.

Not that American genius needs patronage in order to expand. For that explosive sort of stuff will expand though screwed up in a vice, and burst it, though it were triple steel. It is for the nation's sake, and not for her authors' sake, that I would have America be heedful of the increasing greatness among her writers. For how great the shame, if other nations should be

8. At 15½.28 in the manuscript is one of Mrs. Melville's more striking misreadings. A very faint X in the margin signals her doubt about "brilliant part"—and she has marked out "brilliant" and inserted the correct "trillionth."
9. Melville corrected "bowels" from his wife's misreading, "bonds."
1. Here the manuscript wording is restored over *LW*. Melville's first wording (in his wife's hand) was "no Hawthornes Emersons Whittiers Danas Coopers"; he revised and expanded that to "no Hawthorne no Emerson no Whittier, no Irving, no Bryant, no Dana no Cooper no Willis (not the author of the 'Dashes', but the author of the 'Belfrey Pigeon')—were there none of these, and others of like calibre among us, nevertheless, let America first praise mediocrity even, ..." Duyckinck lined out the names and reworded in more general terms for *LW*, so that the passage has been long known in this form: "China has more bowels of real love for us than she. But even were there no strong literary individualities among us, as there are some dozen at least; nevertheless, let America first praise mediocrity even, in her own children. . . ."
2. "Pop" Emmons is a result of Melville's confusion. As a child he was taken for walks on the Boston Common where a local orator, William Emmons, kept a concessionaire's stand at which he sold what the Portland, Maine, *Daily Advertiser* on November 14, 1851, recalled as "a delectable beverage known in those days as 'egg pop,'" hence the soubriquet "Pop Emmons." In the stand Emmons also kept for sale copies of his patriotic orations, which he would willingly repeat. When Melville later saw the four-volume nationalistic epic poem about naval battles in the war of 1812, *The Fredoniad*, he assumed it was by the man he remembered, but the poem was actually by Pop Emmons's brother Richard Emmons.

before her, in crowning her heroes of the pen. But this is almost the case now. American authors have received more just and discriminating praise (however loftily and ridiculously given, in certain cases) even from some Englishmen, than from their own countrymen. There are hardly five critics in America; and several of them are asleep. As for patronage, it is the American author who now patronizes his country, and not his country him. And if at times some among them appeal to the people for more recognition, it is not always with selfish motives, but patriotic ones.

It is true, that but few of them as yet have evinced that decided[3] originality which merits great praise. But that graceful writer, who perhaps of all Americans has received the most plaudits from his own country for his productions,—that very popular and amiable writer, however good, and self-reliant in many things, perhaps owes his chief reputation to the self-acknowledged imitation of a foreign model, and to the studied avoidance of all topics but smooth ones. But it is better to fail in originality, than to succeed in imitation. He who has never failed somewhere, that man can not be great. Failure is the true test of greatness. And if it be said, that continual success is a proof that a man wisely knows his powers,—it is only to be added, that, in that case, he knows them to be small. Let us believe it, then, once for all, that there is no hope for us in these smooth pleasing writers that know their powers. Without malice, but to speak the plain fact, they but furnish an appendix to Goldsmith, and other English authors. And we want no American Goldsmiths; nay, we want no American Miltons. It were the vilest thing you could say of a true American author, that he were an American Tompkins.[4] Call him an American, and have done; for you can not say a nobler thing of him.—But it is not meant that all American writers should studiously cleave to nationality in their writings;[5] only this, no American writer should write like an Englishman, or a Frenchman; let him write like a man, for then he will be sure to write like an American. Let us away with this leaven of literary flunkyism towards England. If either must play the flunky in this thing, let England do it, not us. While we are rapidly preparing for that political supremacy among the nations, which prophetically awaits us at the close of the present century; in a literary point of view, we are deplorably unprepared for it; and we seem studious to remain so. Hitherto, reasons might have existed why this should be; but no good reason exists now. And all that is requisite to amendment in this matter, is simply this: that, while freely acknowledging all excellence, everywhere, we should refrain from unduly lauding foreign writers, and, at the same time, duly recognize the meritorious writers that are our own;—those writers, who breathe that unshackled, democratic spirit of Christianity in all things, which now takes the practical lead in this world, though at the same time

3. An X in the margin at 16.10 indicates Mrs. Melville's uncertainty. She left a space after "as yet have," and later filled it in with "evinced." It *appears* that "decided" was also added later, but it may not have been.
4. Melville substituted "Tompkins" for what he first wrote, "Milton." Melville means "any Tom, Dick, or Harry," an "American Anybody," judging from William Makepeace Thackeray's contemporary usage in an unpleasant comment about Charlotte Brontë, before her marriage, that she needed "some Tomkins or another to love her and be in love with."
5. At 17.7 in the manuscript Mrs. Melville copied "studiously cleave to nationality in their"—leaving a space about as long as that taken up by the word "writers" in the line above. There is an erased X in the margin, but the space is not filled in. Presumably the erased X means that she had thought that there might be another word in the manuscript; she *may* have left a much longer space and filled in "nationality," though that word does not appear to be added at a later time.

led by ourselves—us Americans. Let us boldly contemn all imitation, though it comes to us graceful and fragrant as the morning; and foster all originality, though, at first, it be crabbed and ugly as our own pine knots. And if any of our authors fail, or seem to fail, then, in the words of my enthusiastic Carolina cousin, let us clap him on the shoulder, and back him against all Europe for his second round. The truth is, that in our point of view, this matter of a national literature has come to such a pass with us, that in some sense we must turn bullies, else the day is lost, or superiority so far beyond us, that we can hardly say it will ever be ours.

And now, my countrymen, as an excellent author, of your own flesh and blood,—an unimitating, and, perhaps, in his way, an inimitable man—whom better can I commend to you, in the first place, than Nathaniel Hawthorne. He is one of the new, and far better generation of your writers. The smell of your beeches and hemlocks is upon him; your own broad prairies are in his soul; and if you travel away inland into his deep and noble nature, you will hear the far roar of his Niagara. Give not over to future generations the glad duty of acknowledging him for what he is. Take that joy to yourself, in your own generation; and so shall he feel those grateful impulses in him, that may possibly prompt him to the full flower of some still greater achievement in your eyes. And by confessing him, you thereby confess others; you brace the whole brotherhood. For genius, all over the world, stands hand in hand, and one shock of recognition runs the whole circle round.

In treating of Hawthorne, or rather of Hawthorne in his writings (for I never saw the man; and in the chances of a quiet plantation life, remote from his haunts, perhaps never shall) in treating of his works, I say, I have thus far omitted all mention of his "Twice Told Tales," and "Scarlet Letter." Both are excellent; but full of such manifold, strange and diffusive beauties, that time would all but fail me, to point the half of them out. But there are things in those two books, which, had they been written in England a century ago, Nathaniel Hawthorne had utterly displaced many of the bright names we now revere on authority. But I am content to leave Hawthorne to himself, and to the infallible finding of posterity; and however great may be the praise I have bestowed upon him, I feel, that in so doing, I have more served and honored myself, than him. For, at bottom, great excellence is praise enough to itself; but the feeling of a sincere and appreciative love and admiration towards it, this is relieved by utterance; and warm, honest praise ever leaves a pleasant flavor in the mouth; and it is an honorable thing to confess to what is honorable in others.

But I cannot leave my subject yet. No man can read a fine author, and relish him to his very bones, while he reads, without subsequently fancying to himself some ideal image of the man and his mind. And if you rightly look for it, you will almost always find that the author himself has somewhere furnished you with his own picture. For poets (whether in prose or verse), being painters of Nature, are like their brethren of the pencil, the true portrait-painters, who, in the multitude of likenesses to be sketched, do not invariably omit their own; and in all high instances, they paint them without any vanity, though, at times, with a lurking something, that would take several pages to properly define.

I submit it, then, to those best acquainted with the man personally, whether the following is not Nathaniel Hawthorne;—and to himself, whether something involved in it does not express the temper of his mind,—that lasting temper of all true, candid men—a seeker, not a finder yet:—

"A man now entered, in neglected attire, with the aspect of a thinker, but somewhat too rough-hewn and brawny for a scholar. His face was full of sturdy vigor, with some finer and keener attribute beneath; though harsh at first, it was tempered with the glow of a large, warm heart, which had force enough to heat his powerful intellect through and through. He advanced to the Intelligencer, and looked at him with a glance of such stern sincerity, that perhaps few secrets were beyond its scope.

"'I seek for Truth,' said he."

* * *

Twenty-four hours have elapsed since writing the foregoing. I have just returned from the hay mow, charged more and more with love and admiration of Hawthorne. For I have just been gleaning through the "Mosses," picking up many things here and there that had previously escaped me. And I found that but to glean after this man, is better than to be in at the harvest of others. To be frank (though, perhaps, rather foolish), notwithstanding what I wrote yesterday of these Mosses, I had not then culled them all; but had, nevertheless, been sufficiently sensible of the subtle essence, in them, as to write as I did. To what infinite height of loving wonder and admiration I may yet be borne, when by repeatedly banquetting on these Mosses, I shall have thoroughly incorporated their whole stuff into my being,—that, I can not tell. But already I feel that this Hawthorne has dropped germinous seeds into my soul. He expands and deepens down, the more I contemplate him; and further, and further, shoots his strong New-England roots into the hot soil of my Southern soul.

By careful reference to the "Table of Contents," I now find, that I have gone through all the sketches; but that when I yesterday wrote, I had not at all read two particular pieces, to which I now desire to call special attention,—"A Select Party," and "Young Goodman Brown." Here, be it said to all those whom this poor fugitive scrawl of mine may tempt to the perusal of the "Mosses," that they must on no account suffer themselves to be trifled with, disappointed, or deceived by the triviality of many of the titles to these Sketches. For in more than one instance, the title utterly belies the piece. It is as if rustic demijohns containing the very best and costliest of Falernian and Tokay, were labeled "Cider," "Perry," and "Elderberry Wine." The truth seems to be, that like many other geniuses, this Man of Mosses takes great delight in hoodwinking the world,—at least, with respect to himself. Personally, I doubt not, that he rather prefers to be generally esteemed but a so-so sort of author; being willing to reserve the thorough and acute appreciation of what he is, to that party most qualified to judge—that is, to himself. Besides, at the bottom of their natures, men like Hawthorne, in many things, deem the plaudits of the public such strong presumptive evidence of mediocrity in the object of them, that it would in some degree render them doubtful of their own powers, did they hear much and vociferous braying concerning them in the public pastures. True, I have been braying myself (if you please to be witty enough, to have it so) but then I claim to be the first that has so brayed in this particular matter; and therefore, while pleading guilty to the charge, still claim all the merit due to originality.

But with whatever motive, playful or profound, Nathaniel Hawthorne has chosen to entitle his pieces in the manner he has, it is certain, that

some of them are directly calculated to deceive—egregiously deceive—the superficial skimmer of pages. To be downright and candid once more, let me cheerfully say, that two of these titles did dolefully dupe no less an eagle-eyed reader than myself; and that, too, after I had been impressed with a sense of the great depth and breadth of this American man. "Who in the name of thunder" (as the country-people say in this neighborhood), "who in the name of thunder," would anticipate any marvel in a piece entitled "Young Goodman Brown"? You would of course suppose that it was a simple little tale, intended as a supplement to "Goody Two Shoes." Whereas, it is deep as Dante; nor can you finish it, without addressing the author in his own words—"It is yours to penetrate, in every bosom, the deep mystery of sin." And with Young Goodman, too, in allegorical pursuit of his Puritan wife, you cry out in your anguish,—

> "Faith!" shouted Goodman Brown, in a voice of agony and desperation; and the echoes of the forest mocked him, crying—"Faith! Faith!" as if bewildered wretches were seeking her all through the wilderness.

Now this same piece, entitled "Young Goodman Brown," is one of the two that I had not all read yesterday; and I allude to it now, because it is, in itself, such a strong positive illustration of that blackness in Hawthorne, which I had assumed from the mere occasional shadows of it, as revealed in several of the other sketches. But had I previously perused "Young Goodman Brown," I should have been at no pains to draw the conclusion, which I came to, at a time, when I was ignorant that the book contained one such direct and unqualified manifestation of it.

The other piece of the two referred to, is entitled "A Select Party," which, in my first simplicity upon originally taking hold of the book, I fancied must treat of some pumpkin-pie party in Old Salem, or some Chowder Party on Cape Cod. Whereas, by all the gods of Peedee! it is the sweetest and sublimest thing that has been written since Spenser wrote. Nay, there is nothing in Spenser that surpasses it, perhaps, nothing that equals it. And the test is this: read any canto in "The Faery Queen," and then read "A Select Party," and decide which pleases you the most,—that is, if you are qualified to judge. Do not be frightened at this; for when Spenser was alive, he was thought of very much as Hawthorne is now,—was generally accounted just such a "gentle" harmless man. It may be, that to common eyes, the sublimity of Hawthorne seems lost in his sweetness,—as perhaps in this same "Select Party" of his; for whom, he has builded so august a dome of sunset clouds, and served them on richer plate, than Belshazzar's when he banquetted his lords in Babylon.

But my chief business now, is to point out a particular page in this piece, having reference to an honored guest, who under the name of "The Master Genius" but in the guise "of a young man of poor attire, with no insignia of rank or acknowledged eminence," is introduced to the Man of Fancy, who is the giver of the feast. Now the page having reference to this "Master Genius", so happily expresses much of what I yesterday wrote, touching the coming of the literary Shiloh of America, that I cannot but be charmed by the coincidence; especially, when it shows such a parity of ideas, at least, in this one point, between a man like Hawthorne and a man like me.

And here, let me throw out another conceit of mine touching this American Shiloh, or "Master Genius," as Hawthorne calls him. May it not be, that this commanding mind has not been, is not, and never will be, individually developed in any one man? And would it, indeed, appear so unreasonable to suppose, that this great fullness and overflowing may be, or may be destined to be, shared by a plurality of men of genius? Surely, to take the very greatest example on record, Shakespeare cannot be regarded as in himself the concretion of all the genius of his time; nor as so immeasurably beyond Marlowe, Webster, Ford, Beaumont, Jonson, that those great men can be said to share none of his power? For one, I conceive that there were dramatists in Elizabeth's day, between whom and Shakespeare the distance was by no means great. Let anyone, hitherto little acquainted with those neglected old authors, for the first time read them thoroughly, or even read Charles Lamb's Specimens of them, and he will be amazed at the wondrous ability of those Anaks of men, and shocked at this renewed example of the fact, that Fortune has more to do with fame than merit,—though, without merit, lasting fame there can be none.

Nevertheless, it would argue too illy of my country were this maxim to hold good concerning Nathaniel Hawthorne, a man, who already, in some few minds, has shed "such a light, as never illuminates the earth, save when a great heart burns as the household fire of a grand intellect."

The words are his,—in the "Select Party"; and they are a magnificent setting to a coincident sentiment of my own, but ramblingly expressed yesterday, in reference to himself. Gainsay it who will, as I now write, I am Posterity speaking by proxy—and after times will make it more than good, when I declare—that the American, who up to the present day, has evinced, in Literature, the largest brain with the largest heart, that man is Nathaniel Hawthorne. Moreover, that whatever Nathaniel Hawthorne may hereafter write, "The Mosses from an Old Manse" will be ultimately accounted his masterpiece. For there is a sure, though a secret sign in some works which proves the culmination of the powers (only the developable ones, however) that produced them. But I am by no means desirous of the glory of a prophet. I pray Heaven that Hawthorne may *yet* prove me an impostor in this prediction. Especially, as I somehow cling to the strange fancy, that, in all men, hiddenly reside certain wondrous, occult properties—as in some plants and minerals—which by some happy but very rare accident (as bronze was discovered by the melting of the iron and brass in the burning of Corinth) may chance to be called forth here on earth; not entirely waiting for their better discovery in the more congenial, blessed atmosphere of heaven.

Once more—for it is hard to be finite upon an infinite subject, and all subjects are infinite. By some people, this entire scrawl of mine may be esteemed altogether unnecessary, inasmuch, "as years ago" (they may say) "we found out the rich and rare stuff in this Hawthorne, whom you now parade forth, as if only *yourself* were the discoverer of this Portuguese diamond in our Literature."—But even granting all this; and adding to it, the assumption that the books of Hawthorne have sold by the five-thousand,—what does that signify?—They should be sold by the hundred-thousand; and read by the million; and admired by every one who is capable of Admiration.

Melville's Letters at the Time of *Moby-Dick*†

In the first volume of my biography of Melville (1996) I portrayed Melville as expecting to make a Grand Tour of Europe and perhaps the Levant in late 1849 and several months into 1850. The evidence was his enthusiastic plans in his journal and in the fragment of a letter giving up the trip, which N. P. Willis quoted in his *Home Journal*. Melville's making the long European and Mediterranean trip depended on his getting a large cash advance for *White-Jacket,* the American proofs of which he had carried with him. The problem was that the latest legal ruling meant that no publisher could safely assume that he was buying a protected copyright from an American. After many rejections from publishers, on November 17 Melville wrote "Bad news enough—I shall not see Rome." I commented: "Rarely had Melville put himself on record as wanting anything so much as he wanted this prolonged trip to eastern Europe, the Holy Land, and the entire Mediterranean region. He was careful to note in his journal that he was homesick for his wife and son, but for weeks he had been wild to have his *Wanderjahr,* and he did not want the journal to record the full misery of his relinquishing that trip." The evidence convinced me that Melville had fully expected to make the trip. In 2010, William Reese acquired the letter Melville wrote to his second English publisher, Richard Bentley, who was away in Brighton but willing to come up to London to meet him. Melville wrote back on November 10: "To see you, & settle some business affairs form my only object in visiting London now; tho' I trust that at a more genial season—in the Spring—I shall return, & that we shall then become pleasantly acquainted." Here was at last conclusive proof that Melville fully expected to cross the Channel at once and not return until the spring of 1850, at which time he would have materials for future travel books.

Rarely, indeed, had Melville wanted anything as much as he wanted to make his trip through Europe in late 1849 and early 1850, and rarely had renouncing a desire cost him so much pain. Had he made the trip, the course

† From *The Writings of Herman Melville: The Northwestern-Newberry Edition, Volume 14: Correspondence*, ed. Lynn Horth (Evanston and Chicago: Northwestern University Press and the Newberry Library, 1993), pp. 159–62, 162–64, 172–74, 179–81, 185–87, 190–94, 195–96, 197–98, 199–200, 205–06, 209–10, 211–14, 218–20. (That volume is a complete revision, augmented, of *The Letters of Herman Melville*, ed. Merrell R. Davis and William H. Gilman [New Haven: Yale University Press, 1960].) Copyright © 1993 by Northwestern University Press and the Newberry Library. Reprinted by permission of Northwestern University Press. Notes are by the editors of the second Norton Critical Edition, expanded upon for this volume. The anomalous spellings and punctuation are Melville's own or are those in the best available transcription of now-missing letters.

The letter to Richard Henry Dana Jr. is in the Dana Collection of the Massachusetts Historical Society. The letters to Evert A. Duyckinck are in the Duyckinck Collection of the New York Public Library. The letter to Sarah Morewood is in the Berkshire Athenaeum in Pittsfield, Massachusetts. The letters to Richard Bentley and all the letters to Nathaniel Hawthorne and the one to his wife, Sophia Peabody Hawthorne, are now unlocated (extant, one assumes, and cherished by private collectors). All, however, have been transcribed: the letters to the Hawthornes by their children in nineteenth-century publications and those to Richard Bentley by Gilman and Davis for their 1960 *Letters*. Words in the letters to Hawthorne, in particular, must be absorbed with something less than absolute confidence.

of any literary career he had would have been unimaginably different, and there would not have been the *Moby-Dick* we know. After brooding during an exceptionally long voyage back to New York, Melville settled down to write in February and March and April and May of 1850 when what he had planned to be doing was seeing Rome and everything on the way there and beyond. Even as he absorbed himself in his new manuscript, his London failure was mocked. The New York *Albion* on February 23, 1850, printed a letter from a London importer of foreign books about the end of protected copyright for Americans: "the author of *Typee*, &c., who recently made a voyage to this country on purpose to sell the 'right' of his unpublished *White Jacket*, wearily hawked the book from Piccadilly to Whitechapel, calling upon every publisher in his way, and could find no one rash enough to buy his 'protected right.'" In fact, Melville had wearily hawked the book, and Bentley had bought the book but had not given Melville the advance he needed. Melville's grand renunciation figured into his determination, in September 1850, to buy a house in the Berkshires. If he could not have his Grand Tour, he must write amid natural grandeur, not the streets of New York City. He was not being reasonable in his desire to be in the Berkshires, near his new friend Hawthorne. He was a galley-slave who had not yet come to terms with his renunciation of a Grand Tour and had not yet understood that the lack of international copyright would inevitably doom his career. The letters printed here were written in the aftermath of his failure to see Rome and his failure to face financial realities, as explained in "Damned by Dollars" (on pp. 617–31). He wrote *Moby-Dick* in a sustained period of blind faith in his future as an American writer.

To Richard H. Dana Jr.

NEW YORK May 1, 1850

I thank you very heartily for your friendly letter; and am more pleased than I can well tell, to think that any thing I have written about the sea has at all responded to your own impressions of it. Were I inclined to undue vanity, this one fact would be far more to me than acres & square miles of the superficial shallow praise of the publishing critics. And I am specially delighted at the thought, that those strange, congenial feelings, with which after my first voyage, I for the first time read "Two Years Before the Mast", and while so engaged was, as it were, tied & welded to you by a sort of Siamese link of affectionate sympathy———that these feelings should be reciprocated by you, in your turn, and be called out by any White Jackets or Redburns of mine—this is indeed delightful to me. In fact, My Dear Dana, did I not write these books of mine almost entirely for "lucre"—by the job, as a woodsawyer saws wood—I almost think, I should hereafter—in the case of a sea book—get my M.S.S. neatly & legibly copied by a scrivener—send you that one copy—& deem such a procedure the best publication. * * *

About the "whaling voyage"—I am half way in the work, & am very glad that your suggestion so jumps with mine.[1] It will be a strange sort of a book, tho', I fear; blubber is blubber you know; tho' you may get oil out of

1. Melville's first known reference to *Moby-Dick*, important for his estimate of his progress. He had been working on it for almost three months, and the year before he had written two long books in a four-month stretch. It is important also for his definition of the aesthetic challenge he was confronting (to present the reality of whaling and yet wring poetry from the unpromising material). Melville's sense of what he owed Dana should be taken seriously. In 2016, while

it, the poetry runs as hard as sap from a frozen maple tree;—& to cook the thing up, one must needs throw in a little fancy, which from the nature of the thing, must be ungainly as the gambols of the whales themselves. Yet I mean to give the truth of the thing, spite of this. * * *

To Richard Bentley

NEW YORK June 27, 1850

In the latter part of the coming autumn I shall have ready a new work;[2] and I write you now to propose its publication in England.

The book is a romance of adventure, founded upon certain wild legends in the Southern Sperm Whale Fisheries, and illustrated by the author's own personal experience, of two years & more, as a harpooneer.

Should you be inclined to undertake the book, I think that it will be worth to you £200.[3] Could you be positively put in possession of the copyright, it might be worth to you a larger sum—considering its great novelty; for I do not know that the subject treated of has ever been worked up by a romancer; or, indeed, by any writer, in any adequate manner. But as things are, I say £200, because that sum was given for "White-Jacket"; and it does not appear, as yet, that you have been interfeared with in your publication of that book; & therefore there seems reason to conclude, that, at £200, "White Jacket" must have been, in some degree, profitable to you.

In case of an arrangement, I shall, of course, put you in early & certain possession of the proof sheets, as in previous cases.

Being desirous of early arranging this matter in London,—so as to lose no time, when the book has passed thro' the Harpers' press here—I beg, M' Bentley, that you at once write me as to your views concerning it.

Circumstances make it indispensable, that if the book suits you at the sum above-named, that on the day of sale, you give your note for that sum—at four months say—to whomever I depute to ratify the arrangement with you. * * *

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preparing this new NCE, Parker discovered a very late but plausible newspaper account. The respected journalist E. J. Edwards in the Pittsburgh *Post-Gazette* on February 8, 1912, reported that before his death in 1877 Charles F. Briggs (once Melville's editor at Putnam's) had told him of a conversation he had had with Melville when they both were at the New York Custom-House. As Edwards remembered it, Melville had told Briggs that when he told his story to sailors after being picked up at Nukaheva by the *Lucy Ann* one of the men asked if he had read Dana's book and, when answered in the affirmative, declared that his adventures with the Typees were more exciting than Dana's. Edwards puts these words into Melville's mouth: "That gave me the inspiration to write the story of my adventures; and as I wrote along I found that I was doing it very well. I had no idea, however, when the book was first published that it would attain the popularity it did. I might have written a story, even if I had not been inspired to do that by Dana's book. But the fact remains that my book *Typee* was originally suggested by Dana's book. I wish I could hope that it would become as great a classic as Dana's book has become."

2. Although Melville expected to "have ready" by the autumn of 1850 the "romance of adventure" proposed in this letter, proofs of the American edition were not sent to Bentley until the next autumn—on September 10, 1851. Bentley published it with Melville's original title, *The Whale*, in October of 1851. The book made use of Melville's whaling experiences of "two years & more" (about twenty-six months) aboard three different whaleships—the *Acushnet,* the *Lucy Ann*, and the *Charles and Henry*—only on the last of which, for six months, was he possibly rated as a harpooneer (boatsteerer).
3. About $1,000 in 1850 money—enough to support a small family for half a year or more. It helps to envision what a few thousand dollars would buy. In 1850 Melville's uncle Thomas's heirs sold the grand house and 250 acres south of Pittsfield (where the Melvilles spent the summer) to J. Rowland Morewood for $6,500, the same price that Melville (or his father-in-law) paid for the contiguous Arrowhead, a rundown farmhouse with 160 acres.

To Evert A. Duyckinck

ARROWHEAD December 13, 1850

I have a sort of sea-feeling here in the country, now that the ground is all covered with snow. I look out of my window in the morning when I rise as I would out of a port-hole of a ship in the Atlantic. My room seems a ship's cabin; & at nights when I wake up & hear the wind shrieking, I almost fancy there is too much sail on the house, & I had better go on the roof & rig in the chimney.

Do you want to know how I pass my time?—I rise at eight—thereabouts—& go to my barn—say good-morning to the horse, & give him his breakfast. (It goes to my heart to give him a cold one, but it can't be helped) Then, pay a visit to my cow—cut up a pumpkin or two for her, & stand by to see her eat it—for it's a pleasant sight to see a cow move her jaws—she does it so mildly & with such a sanctity.——My own breakfast over, I go to my work-room & light my fire—then spread my M.S.S on the table—take one business squint at it, & fall to with a will. At 2½ P.M. I hear a preconcerted knock at my door, which (by request) continues till I rise & go to the door, which serves to wean me effectively from my writing, however interested I may be. My friends the horse & cow now demand their dinner—& I go & give it them. My own dinner over, I rig my sleigh & with my mother or sisters start off for the village—& if it be a Literary World day,[4] great is the satisfaction thereof.—My evenings I spend in a sort of mesmeric state in my room—not being able to read—only now & then skimming over some large-printed book.—Can you send me about fifty fast-writing youths, with an easy style & not averse to polishing their labors? If you can, I wish you would, because since I have been here I have planned about that number of future works & cant find enough time to think about them separately.—But I dont know but a book in a man's brain is better off than a book bound in calf—at any rate it is safer from criticism. And taking a book off the brain, is akin to the ticklish & dangerous business of taking an old painting off a panel—you have to scrape off the whole brain in order to get at it with due safety—& even then, the painting may not be worth the trouble.——* * *

To Evert A. Duyckinck

ARROWHEAD February 12, 1851

"A dash of salt spray"![5]—where am I to get salt spray here in inland Pittsfield? I shall have to import it from foreign parts. All I now have to do with salt, is when I salt my horse & cow—not *salt them down*—I dont mean that (tho' indeed I have before now dined on "salt-horse") but when I give them their weekly salt, by way of seasoning all their week's meals in one prospective lump.

4. I.e., a day when the weekly *Literary World*, edited by Duyckinck and his brother George, would arrive from New York, usually on a Friday (if it was sent a day earlier than the date of the issue) or Saturday.
5. Duyckinck had asked Melville to contribute a nautical piece to *Holden's Dollar Magazine*, a monthly that he was now editing in addition to the weekly *Literary World*.

How shall a man go about refusing a man?[6]—Best be round-about, or plumb on the mark?——I can not write the thing you want. I am in the humor to lend a hand to a friend, if I can;—but I am not in the humor to write the kind of thing you need—and I am not in the humor to write for Holden's Magazine. If I were to go on to give you all my reasons—you would pronounce me a bore, so I will not do that. You must be content to beleive that I *have* reasons, or else I would not refuse so small a thing.—As for the Daguerreotype (I spell the word right from your sheet) that's what I can not send you, because I have none. And if I had, I would not send it for such a purpose, even to you.—Pshaw! you cry—& so cry I.—"This is intensified vanity, not true modesty or anything of that sort!"—Again, I say so too. But if it be so, how can I help it. The fact is, almost everybody is having his "mug" engraved nowadays; so that this test of distinction is getting to be reversed; and therefore, to see one's "mug" in a magazine, is presumptive evidence that he's a nobody. So being as vain a man as ever lived; & beleiving that my illustrious name is famous throughout the world—I respectfully decline being *oblivionated* by a Daguerre-type (what a devel of an unspellable word!)

We are all queer customers, Mr Duyckinck, you, I, & every body else in the world. So if I here seem queer to you, be sure, I am not alone in my queerness, tho' it present itself at a different port, perhaps, from other people, since every one has his own distinct peculiarity. But I trust you take me aright. If you dont' I shall be sorry—that's all.

After a long procrastination, I drove down to see M[r] Hawthorne a couple of weeks ago. I found him, of course, buried in snow; & the delightful scenery about him, all wrapped up & tucked away under a napkin, as it were. He was to have made me a day's visit, & I had promised myself much pleasure in getting him up in my snug room here, & discussing the Universe with a bottle of brandy & cigars. But he has not been able to come, owing to sickness in his family.—or else, he's up to the lips in the *Universe* again.

By the way, I have recently read his "Twice Told Tales"[7] (I had not read but a few of them before) I think they far exceed the "Mosses"—they are, I fancy, an earlier vintage from his vine. Some of those sketches are wonderfully subtle. Their deeper meanings are worthy of a Brahmin. Still there is something lacking—a good deal lacking—to the plump sphericity of the man. What is that?—He does'nt patronise the butcher—he needs roast-beef, done rare.—Nevertheless, for one, I regard Hawthorne (in his books) as evincing a quality of genius, immensely loftier, & more profound, too, than any other American has shown hitherto in the printed

6. Duyckinck expected to include an engraving of Melville in an upcoming issue of *Holden's* as that month's literary personality. Melville's refusal seemed inexplicable to the editor, who enlisted Melville's formidable mother to try to make her son listen to reason. The upshot of Melville's refusal is that we have no reliable image of him until 1860, only a too-vague image in a painting made soon after the publication of *Typee*. Ch. 33 of *Moby-Dick* contains the best explanation of Melville's seemingly perverse and ultimately suicidal attitude: he was one of "God's true princes of the Empire," kept from "the world's hustings." A biographer can only wish fervently that Melville had listened to his mother on this and other occasions, as on February 10, 1854, when she eloquently urged him to become a lecturer.
7. Melville had borrowed *Twice-Told Tales* (1837) from Duyckinck in his busy (two-book) summer of 1849, and on January 22, 1851, received two inscribed copies from Hawthorne himself (first series, 1845, and vol. 2, second series, 1842). See Sealts, *Melville's Reading* (1988), nos. 258–60.

form. Irving is a grasshopper to him—putting the *souls* of the two men together, I mean[8]—But I must close. * * *

I am just on the point of starting a'foot for the village, and have glanced over the previous letter, before sealing.——I thought there seemed an unkindness in it—& that had I, under the circumstances, rec'd such a letter from you, in reply to such a letter as yours to me—I would deem it not well of you.—Still, I can't help it—and I may yet be of some better service to you than merely jotting a paragraph for Holden's. * * *

To Nathaniel Hawthorne

ARROWHEAD [April 16?], 1851

"The House of the Seven Gables: A Romance. By Nathaniel Hawthorne. One vol. 16mo, pp. 344."[9] The contents of this book do not belie its rich, clustering, romantic title. With great enjoyment we spent almost an hour in each separate gable. This book is like a fine old chamber, abundantly, but still judiciously, furnished with precisely that sort of furniture best fitted to furnish it. There are rich hangings, wherein are braided scenes from tragedies! There is old china with rare devices, set out on the carved buffet; there are long and indolent lounges to throw yourself upon; there is an admirable sideboard, plentifully stored with good viands; there is a smell as of old wine in the pantry; and finally, in one corner, there is a dark little black-letter volume in golden clasps, entitled "Hawthorne: A Problem." It has delighted us; it has piqued a reperusal; it has robbed us of a day, and made us a present of a whole year of thoughtfulness; it has bred great exhilaration and exultation with the remembrance that the architect of the Gables resides only six miles off, and not three thousand miles away, in England, say. We think the book, for pleasantness of running interest, surpasses the other works of the author. The curtains are more drawn; the sun comes in more; genialities peep out more. Were we to particularize what

8. See the "Mosses" essay (p. 544 herein) for Melville's defying the dominant opinion that Irving was America's greatest writer. Long before this time Duyckinck may have learned of the distress the essay had caused Irving and his biographer-nephew Pierre Irving. For the story see Parker's *The Powell Papers: A Confidence Man Amok Among the Anglo-American Literati* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern UP, 2011), especially pp. 213–14. What enraged Pierre Irving for more than a decade was Melville's calling Irving a self-confessed imitator of Oliver Goldsmith, using Irving's tribute in his biography of Goldsmith against him. There is an earlier mystery. Irving was friendly with Gansevoort Melville in London early in 1846 and helped expedite the publication of *Typee*. Perhaps the American minister Louis McLane, who hated Gansevoort and was trying to remove him from his post as secretary of the legation, complained to Irving. Whatever happened, no one has yet found any comment Irving made about Herman Melville after early 1846.

9. On April 11, 1851, when Melville visited the Hawthornes at Lenox, Hawthorne gave him an inscribed copy of the newly published *The House of the Seven Gables*. In this letter Melville pretends to be reviewing it for an imaginary *Pittsfield Secret Review*. On May 7, Mrs. Hawthorne wrote her sister Elizabeth Peabody about the "review" and Melville's admiration for Hawthorne:

> The fresh, sincere, glowing mind that utters it is in a state of "fluid consciousness," & to Mr Hawthorne speaks his innermost about GOD, the Devil & Life if so be he can get at the Truth—for he is a boy in opinion—having settled nothing yet—informe—ingens—& it would betray him to make public his confessions & efforts to grasp—because they would be considered perhaps impious, if one did not take in the whole scope of the case. Nothing pleases me better than to sit & hear this growing man dash his tumultuous waves of thought up against Mr Hawthorne's great, genial, comprehending silences—out of the profound of which a wonderful smile, or one powerful word sends back the foam & fury into a peaceful booming, calm—or perchance, not into a calm—but a murmuring expostulation—for there is never a "mush of concession" in him—Yet such a love & reverence & admiration for Mr Hawthorne as is really beautiful to witness.

has most struck us in the deeper passages, we would point out the scene where Clifford, for a moment, would fain throw himself forth from the window to join the procession; or the scene where the Judge is left seated in his ancestral chair. Clifford is full of an awful truth throughout. He is conceived in the finest, truest spirit. He is no caricature. He is Clifford. And here we would say that, did circumstances permit, we should like nothing better than to devote an elaborate and careful paper to the full consideration and analysis of the purport and significance of what so strongly characterizes all of this author's writings. There is a certain tragic phase of humanity which, in our opinion, was never more powerfully embodied than by Hawthorne. We mean the tragicalness of human thought in its own unbiassed, native, and profounder workings. We think that into no recorded mind has the intense feeling of the visable truth ever entered more deeply than into this man's. By visable truth, we mean the apprehension of the absolute condition of present things as they strike the eye of the man who fears them not, though they do their worst to him,—the man who, like Russia or the British Empire, declares himself a sovereign nature (in himself) amid the powers of heaven, hell, and earth. He may perish; but so long as he exists he insists upon treating with all Powers upon an equal basis. If any of those other Powers choose to withhold certain secrets, let them; that does not impair my sovereignty in myself; that does not make me tributary. And perhaps, after all, there is *no* secret. We incline to think that the Problem of the Universe is like the Freemason's mighty secret, so terrible to all children. It turns out, at last, to consist in a triangle, a mallet, and an apron,—nothing more! We incline to think that God cannot explain His own secrets, and that He would like a little information upon certain points Himself. We mortals astonish Him as much as He us. But it is this *Being* of the matter; there lies the knot with which we choke ourselves. As soon as you say *Me, a God, a Nature*, so soon you jump off from your stool and hang from the beam. Yes, that word is the hangman. Take God out of the dictionary, and you would have Him in the street.

There is the grand truth about Nathaniel Hawthorne. He says NO! in thunder; but the Devil himself cannot make him say *yes*. For all men who say *yes*, lie; and all men who say *no*,—why, they are in the happy condition of judicious, unincumbered travellers in Europe; they cross the frontiers into Eternity with nothing but a carpet-bag,—that is to say, the Ego. Whereas those *yes*-gentry, they travel with heaps of baggage, and, damn them! they will never get through the Custom House. What's the reason, Mr. Hawthorne, that in the last stages of metaphysics a fellow always falls to *swearing* so? I could rip an hour. You see, I began with a little criticism extracted for your benefit from the "Pittsfield Secret Review," and here I have landed in Africa.

Walk down one of these mornings and see me. No nonsense; come. Remember me to Mrs. Hawthorne and the children.

H. Melville.

P.S. The marriage of Phoebe with the daguerreotypist is a fine stroke, because of his turning out to be a *Maule*.[1] If you pass Hepzibah's cent-shop, buy me a Jim Crow (fresh) and send it to me by Ned Higgins.

1. In his reference to characters in *The House of the Seven Gables* Melville puns on the name of one of them (Maule) and the hammer-like tool (maul).

To Nathaniel Hawthorne

ARROWHEAD Early May 1851[2]

I should have been rumbling down to you in my pine-board chariot a long time ago, were it not that for some weeks past I have been more busy than you can well imagine,—out of doors,—building and patching and tinkering away in all directions. Besides, I had my crops to get in,—corn and potatoes (I hope to show you some famous ones by and by),—and many other things to attend to, all accumulating upon this one particular season. I work myself; and at night my bodily sensations are akin to those I have so often felt before, when a hired man, doing my day's work from sun to sun. But I mean to continue visiting you until you tell me that my visits are both supererogatory and superfluous. With no son of man do I stand upon any etiquette or ceremony, except the Christian ones of charity and honesty. I am told, my fellow-man, that there is an aristocracy of the brain. Some men have boldly advocated and asserted it. Schiller seems to have done so, though I don't know much about him.[3] At any rate, it is true that there have been those who, while earnest in behalf of political equality, still accept the intellectual estates. And I can well perceive, I think, how a man of superior mind can, by its intense cultivation, bring himself, as it were, into a certain spontaneous aristocracy of feeling,—exceedingly nice and fastidious,—similar to that which, in an English Howard,[4] conveys a torpedo-fish thrill at the slightest contact with a social plebeian. So, when you see or hear of my ruthless democracy on all sides, you may possibly feel a touch of a shrink, or something of that sort. It is but nature to be shy of a mortal who boldly declares that a thief in jail is as honorable a personage as Gen. George Washington. This is ludicrous. But Truth is the silliest thing under the sun. Try to get a living by the Truth—and go to the Soup Societies. Heavens! Let any clergyman try to preach the Truth from its very stronghold, the pulpit, and they would ride him out of his church on his own pulpit bannister. It can hardly be doubted that all Reformers are bottomed upon the truth, more or less; and to the world at large are not reformers almost universally laughing-stocks? Why so? Truth is ridiculous to men. Thus easily in my room here do I, conceited and garrulous, reverse the test of my Lord Shaftesbury.[5]

It seems an inconsistency to assert unconditional democracy in all things, and yet confess a dislike to all mankind—in the mass. But not so.—But it's an endless sermon,—no more of it. I began by saying that the

2. Redated from June 1?, 1851, by Parker (*Herman Melville: A Biography*, 1.841–44). The complicated evidence turns on a previously unknown letter Melville's copyist-sister Augusta Melville wrote her brother Allan on May 16, 1850, a letter deposited at Arrowhead by Anna Morewood a few years before her death in the 1990s. She was the widow of Henry Gansevoort Morewood (much older than she) and the daughter-in-law of Allan's daughter Maria (Milie), born in February 1849.
3. Melville seems to have had in mind the quality pointed out in Wolfgang Menzel's criticism of Friedrich Schiller as quoted by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow in *The Poets and Poetry of Europe* (1845, 308):

> We turn now to the second secret of the beauty belonging to Schiller's ideal characters. This is their nobleness,—their honorableness. His heroes and heroines never discredit the pride and dignity which announce a loftier nature; and all their outward acts bear the stamp of magnanimity and inborn nobleness. Its perfect opposite is the vulgar character, and that conventional spirit which serves for a bridle and leading-strings to the vulgar nature.

4. Among English families, the Howards had long held first place, its head being the duke of Norfolk. See *Moby-Dick*, Ch. 89.
5. Anthony Ashley Cooper, 3rd Earl of Shaftesbury (1671–1713) maintained that one test of truth was its power to survive ridicule. As he put it in "An Essay on the Freedom of Wit and Humour"

reason I have not been to Lenox is this,—in the evening I feel completely done up, as the phrase is, and incapable of the long jolting to get to your house and back. In a week or so, I go to New York, to bury myself in a third-story room, and work and slave on my "Whale" while it is driving through the press. *That* is the only way I can finish it now,—I am so pulled hither and thither by circumstances. The calm, the coolness, the silent grass-growing mood in which a man *ought* always to compose,—that, I fear, can seldom be mine. Dollars damn me; and the malicious Devil is forever grinning in upon me, holding the door ajar. My dear Sir, a presentiment is on me,—I shall at last be worn out and perish, like an old nutmeg-grater, grated to pieces by the constant attrition of the wood, that is, the nutmeg. What I feel most moved to write, that is banned,—it will not pay. Yet, altogether, write the *other* way I cannot. So the product is a final hash, and all my books are botches. I'm rather sore, perhaps, in this letter; but see my hand!—four blisters on this palm, made by hoes and hammers within the last few days. It is a rainy morning; so I am indoors, and all work suspended. I feel cheerfully disposed, and therefore I write a little bluely. Would the Gin were here! If ever, my dear Hawthorne, in the eternal times that are to come, you and I shall sit down in Paradise, in some little shady corner by ourselves; and if we shall by any means be able to smuggle a basket of champagne there (I won't believe in a Temperance Heaven), and if we shall then cross our celestial legs in the celestial grass that is forever tropical, and strike our glasses and our heads together, till both musically ring in concert,—then, O my dear fellow-mortal, how shall we pleasantly discourse of all the things manifold which now so distress us,—when all the earth shall be but a reminiscence, yea, its final dissolution an antiquity. Then shall songs be composed as when wars are over; humorous, comic songs,—"Oh, when I lived in that queer little hole called the world," or, "Oh, when I toiled and sweated below," or, "Oh, when I knocked and was knocked in the fight"—yes, let us look forward to such things. Let us swear that, though now we sweat, yet it is because of the dry heat which is indispensable to the nourishment of the vine which is to bear the grapes that are to give us the champagne hereafter.

But I was talking about the "Whale." As the fishermen say, "he's in his flurry" when I left him some three weeks ago. I'm going to take him by his jaw, however, before long, and finish him up in some fashion or other. What's the use of elaborating what, in its very essence, is so short-lived as a modern book? Though I wrote the Gospels in this century, I should die in the gutter.—I talk all about myself, and this is selfishness and egotism. Granted. But how help it? I am writing to you; I know little about you, but something about myself. So I write about myself,—at least, to you. Don't trouble yourself, though, about writing; and don't trouble yourself about visiting; and when you *do* visit, don't trouble yourself about talking. I will do all the writing and visiting and talking myself.—By the way, in the last "Dollar Magazine" I read "The Unpardonable Sin."[6] He was a sad fellow, that

(1709), truth "can stand in any light," even the challenging light of ridicule. Shaftesbury cited the fact that Socrates's character and doctrines seemed only the more "solid and just" after they had "stood the Proof" of Aristophanes's ridicule. But whereas Shaftesbury is saying that you can know a thing is true if it survives ridicule, Melville is saying that you can know a thing is true because it is considered ridiculous. Melville is reversing Shaftesbury's test. Julian Hawthorne printed "revere" (misreading Melville's hand).

6. Hawthorne's story had been reprinted in *Holden's Dollar Magazine* for May 1851.

Ethan Brand. I have no doubt you are by this time responsible for many a shake and tremor of the tribe of "general readers." It is a frightful poetical creed that the cultivation of the brain eats out the heart. But it's my *prose* opinion that in most cases, in those men who have fine brains and work them well, the heart extends down to hams. And though you smoke them with the fire of tribulation, yet, like veritable hams, the head only gives the richer and the better flavor. I stand for the heart. To the dogs with the head! I had rather be a fool with a heart, than Jupiter Olympus with his head. The reason the mass of men fear God, and *at bottom dislike* Him, is because they rather distrust His heart, and fancy Him all brain like a watch. (You perceive I employ a capital initial in the pronoun referring to the Diety; don't you think there is a slight dash of flunkeyism in that usage?) Another thing. I was in New York for four-and-twenty hours the other day, and saw a portrait of N. H. And I have seen and heard many flattering (in a publisher's point of view) allusions to the "Seven Gables." And I have seen "Tales," and "A New Volume" announced, by N. H.[7] So upon the whole, I say to myself, this N. H. is in the ascendant. My dear Sir, they begin to patronize. All Fame is patronage. Let me be infamous: there is no patronage in *that*. What "reputation" H. M. has is horrible. Think of it! To go down to posterity is bad enough, any way; but to go down as a "man who lived among the cannibals"! When I speak of posterity, in reference to myself, I only mean the babies who will probably be born in the moment immediately ensuing upon my giving up the ghost. I shall go down to some of them, in all likelihood. "Typee" will be given to them, perhaps, with their gingerbread. I have come to regard this matter of Fame as the most transparent of all vanities. I read Solomon more and more, and every time see deeper and deeper and unspeakable meanings in him. I did not think of Fame, a year ago, as I do now. My development has been all within a few years past. I am like one of those seeds taken out of the Egyptian Pyramids, which, after being three thousand years a seed and nothing but a seed, being planted in English soil, it developed itself, grew to greenness, and then fell to mould.[8] So I. Until I was twenty-five, I had no development at all. From my twenty-fifth year I date my life. Three weeks have scarcely passed, at any time between then and now, that I have not unfolded within myself. But I feel that I am now come to the inmost leaf of the bulb, and that shortly the flower must fall to the mould. It seems to me now that Solomon was the truest man who ever spoke,[9] and yet that he a little *managed* the truth with a view to popular conservatism; or else there have been many corruptions and interpolations of the text—In reading some of Goethe's sayings, so worshipped by his votaries, I came across this, "*Live in the all*." That is to say, your separate identity is but a wretched one,—good; but get out of yourself, spread and expand

7. Melville may have seen any one of a number of Hawthorne portraits, possibly the 1850 one by Cephas Thompson (see *Correspondence* [1993], pp. 188–89). Announcements of Hawthorne's forthcoming books appeared in the *Literary World* and elsewhere during and after May 1851.
8. At about this time, the English novelist G. P. R. James carried on an experiment at Stockbridge, south of Pittsfield, of planting some Egyptian wheat seed taken from the inside of a mummy case. His son Charles Leigh James described the planting, saw it come up, and observed that "it did not seed 'worth a continental.'" See S. M. Ellis, *The Solitary Horseman, or the Life and Adventures of G. P. R. James*, as cited in *American Notes and Queries* 7 (December 1947): 41.
9. See *Moby-Dick* (Ch. 96): "The truest of all men was the Man of Sorrows, and the truest of all books is Solomon's, and Ecclesiastes is the fine hammered steel of woe. 'All is vanity.' ALL. This wilful world hath not got hold of unchristian Solomon's wisdom yet."

yourself, and bring to yourself the tinglings of life that are felt in the flowers and the woods, that are felt in the planets Saturn and Venus, and the Fixed Stars. What nonsense! Here is a fellow with a raging toothache. "My dear boy," Goethe says to him, "you are sorely afflicted with that tooth; but you must *live in the all*, and then you will be happy!" As with all great genius, there is an immense deal of flummery in Goethe, and in proportion to my own contact with him, a monstrous deal of it in me.[1]

H. Melville

P.S. "Amen!" saith Hawthorne.

N.B. This "all" feeling, though, there is some truth in. You must often have felt it, lying on the grass on a warm summer's day. Your legs seem to send out shoots into the earth. Your hair feels like leaves upon your head. This is the *all* feeling. But what plays the mischief with the truth is that men will insist upon the universal application of a temporary feeling or opinion.

P.S. You must not fail to admire my discretion in paying the postage on this letter.

To Nathaniel Hawthorne

ARROWHEAD June 29, 1851

The clear air and open window invite me to write to you. For some time past I have been so busy with a thousand things that I have almost forgotten when I wrote you last, and whether I received an answer. This most persuasive season has now for weeks recalled me from certain crotchetty and over doleful chimearas, the like of which men like you and me and some others, forming a chain of God's posts round the world, must be content to encounter now and then, and fight them the best way we can. But come they will,—for, in the boundless, trackless, but still glorious wild wilderness through which these outposts run, the Indians do sorely abound, as well as the insignificant but still stinging mosquitoes. Since you have been here, I have been building some shanties of houses (connected with the old one) and likewise some shanties of chapters and essays. I have been plowing and sowing and raising and painting and printing and

1. Melville's exact source remains to be discovered. The idea is general in Goethe; the particular thought is doubtless a translation of a phrase in stanza four of "Generalbeichte":

> Willst du Absolution
> Deinen Treuen geben,
> Wollen wir nach deinem Wink
> Unablässlich streben,
> Uns von Halben zu entwohnen
> Und in Ganzen, Guten, Schönen
> Resolut zu leben.

Thomas Carlyle (1795–1881), Scottish philosopher important in introducing German writers to Americans, translates it "To live . . . in the Whole" (Death of Goethe," *Critical and Miscellaneous Essays*, 3 [1839]: 205), and John S. Dwight renders it "living" "In the Whole" (George Ripley, ed., *Specimens of Foreign Standard Literature*, Vol. 3, *Select Minor Poems from the German of Goethe and Schiller*, 1839, p. 48). One of Ripley's notes on Goethe may have helped give currency to the idea Melville was lampooning: "Total occupation of himself, heart and soul, in the subject nearest him,—living *in* it, and identifying himself with it for the time,—left no room for sick yearnings, made each little sphere a world, each moment an eternity. This is evidently what he meant by 'Living in the Whole,' by finding 'All in One, and One in All'" (p. 365).

praying,—and now begin to come out upon a less bustling time, and to enjoy the calm prospect of things from a fair piazza at the north of the old farm house here.

Not entirely yet, though, am I without something to be urgent with. The "Whale" is only half through the press; for, wearied with the long delay of the printers, and disgusted with the heat and dust of the babylonish brick-kiln of New York, I came back to the country to feel the grass—and end the book reclining on it, if I may.—I am sure you will pardon this speaking all about myself,—for if I *say* so much on that head, be sure all the rest of the world are thinking about themselves ten times as much. Let us speak, though we show all our faults and weaknesses,—for it is a sign of strength to be weak, to know it, and out with it,—not in set way and ostentatiously, though, but incidentally and without premeditation.—But I am falling into my old foible—preaching. I am busy, but shall not be very long. Come and spend a day here, if you can and want to; if not, stay in Lenox, and God give you long life. When I am quite free of my present engagements, I am going to treat myself to a ride and a visit to you. Have ready a bottle of brandy, because I always feel like drinking that heroic drink when we talk ontological heroics together. This is rather a crazy letter in some respects, I apprehend. If so, ascribe it to the intoxicating effects of the latter end of June operating upon a very susceptible and peradventure feeble temperament.

Shall I send you a fin of the *Whale* by way of a specimen mouthful? The tail is not yet cooked—though the hell-fire in which the whole book is broiled might not unreasonably have cooked it all ere this. This is the book's motto (the secret one),—Ego non baptiso te in nomine—but make out the rest yourself.[2]

To Richard Bentley

ARROWHEAD July 20, 1851

I promptly received your note of the 3d Inst: in reply to mine concerning the publication of my new book.

I accept your offer for the work;[3] but not without strong hope that before long, we shall be able to treat upon a firmer basis than now, & heretofore; & that with the more assurance you will be disposed to make overtures for American books. And here let me say to you,—since you are peculiarly interested in the matter—that in all reasonable probability no International Copyright will ever be obtained—in our time, at least—if you Englishmen wait at all for the first step to be taken in this country. Who have any motive in this country to bestir themselves in this thing?

2. Melville's diabolical baptismal formula at the end of this letter appears in fuller form in *Moby-Dick*, Ch. 113, when Captain Ahab uses the blood of the pagan harpooneers to baptize the harpoon with which he plans to kill the white whale. For Melville's source, first discovered by Geoffrey Sanborn, see "*Moby-Dick* and Melville's Notes in His Shakespeare" on p. 543 herein. See Parker, *Herman Melville: A Biography* (I.847) for the likelihood that Melville saw some of his religious reviewers as witch-hunters and identified himself with those persecuted and killed as witches. In *Moby-Dick* (Ch. 54), one of the Spanish dons hopes that "Dame Isabella's Inquisition," the cruel legacy of Queen Isabella and King Ferdinand of Spain, has waned in Lima. Continuing to brood about religious persecution, in 1856 Melville thought of dedicating his American satire *The Confidence-Man* to victims of *auto-da-fé* (act of faith; in practice, burning alive at the stake).
3. Bentley had made a generous offer, £150.

Only the authors.—Who are the authors?—A handful. And what influence have they to bring to bear upon any question whose settlement must necessarily assume a political form?—They can bring scarcely any influence whatever. This country & nearly all its affairs are governed by sturdy backwoodsmen—noble fellows enough, but not at all literary, & who care not a fig for any authors except those who write those most saleable of all books nowadays—ie—the newspapers, & magazines. And tho' the number of cultivated, catholic men, who may be supposed to feel an interest in a national literature, is large & every day growing larger; yet they are nothing in comparison with the overwhelming majority who care nothing about it. This country is at present engaged in furnishing material for future authors; not in encouraging its living ones.

Nevertheless, if this matter by any means comes to be made nationally conspicuous; and if you in England come out magnanimously, & protect a foreign author; then there is that sort of stuff in the people here, which will be sure to make them all eagerness in reciprocating. For, be assured, that my countrymen will never be outdone in generosity.—Therefore, if you desire an International Copyright—hoist your flag on your side of the water, & the signal will be answered; but look for no flag on this side till then.

I am now passing thro' the press, the closing sheets of my new work; so that I shall be able to forward it to you in the course of two or three weeks—perhaps a little longer. I shall forward it to you thro' the Office of the Legation. And upon your receipt of it, I suppose you will immediately proceed to printing; as, of course, publication will not take place here, till you have made yourself safe.—You say you will give me your notes at three & six months; I infer that this means from the time of receiving the book. * * *

To Nathaniel Hawthorne

ARROWHEAD July 22, 1851

This is not a letter, or even a note—but only a passing word said to you over your garden gate. I thank you for your easy-flowing long letter (received yesterday) which flowed through me, and refreshed all my meadows, as the Housatonic—opposite me—does in reality. I am now busy with various things—not incessantly though; but enough to require my frequent tinkerings; and this is the height of the haying season, and my nag is dragging me home his winter's dinners all the time. And so, one way and another, I am not yet a disengaged man; but shall be, very soon. Meantime, the earliest good chance I get, I shall roll down to you.

My dear fellow-being, we—that is, you and I—must hit upon some little bit of vagabondism, before Autumn comes. Graylock[4]—we must go and vagabondize there. But ere we start we must dig a deep hole and bury all the Blue Devils,[5] there to abide till the Last Day. * * *

4. The highest mountain in Massachusetts, visible to the north on a clear day from Melville's study window at Arrowhead, his farmhouse south of Pittsfield.
5. The blues or hypos such as Ishmael feels at the start of "Loomings."

To Sarah Huyler Morewood[6]

ARROWHEAD September 12 [or 19?], 1851

* * * The "Hour & the Man" is exceedingly acceptable to me. "Zanoni" is a very fine book in very fine print—but I shall endeavor to surmount that difficulty. At present, however, the Fates have plunged me into certain silly thoughts and wayward speculations[7] which will prevent me, for a time, from falling into the reveries of these books—for a fine book is a sort of revery to us—is it not?—So I shall regard them as my Paradise in store, & Mrs Morewood the goddess from whom it comes.

Concerning my own forthcoming book—it is off my hands, but must cross the sea before publication here. Dont you buy it—dont you read it, when it does come out, because it is by no means the sort of book for you. It is not a peice of fine feminine Spitalfields silk[8]—but is of the horrible texture of a fabric that should be woven of ships' cables & hausers. A Polar wind blows through it, & birds of prey hover over it. Warn all gentle fastidious people from so much as peeping into the book—on risk of a lumbago & sciatics.

To Evert A. Duyckinck

ARROWHEAD November 7, 1851

Your letter received last night had a sort of stunning effect on me.[9] For some days past being engaged in the woods with axe, wedge, & beetle,[1] the Whale had almost completely slipped me for the time (& I was the merrier for it) when Crash! comes Moby Dick himself (as you justly say) & reminds me of what I have been about for part of the last year or two. It is really & truly a surprising coincidence—to say the least. I make no doubt it IS Moby Dick himself, for there is no account of his capture after the sad fate of the Pequod about fourteen years ago.—Ye Gods! What a Commentator is this Ann Alexander whale. What he has to say is short & pithy & very much to the point. I wonder if my evil art has raised this monster.

The Behrings Straits Disaster, too, & the cording along the New Foundland coast of those scores & scores of fishermen, and the inland gales on the Lakes. Verily the pot boileth inside & out. And woe unto us, we but live in the days that have been. Yet even then they found time to be jolly.

6. Sarah Morewood and her husband, Rowland Morewood, lived at Broadhall, the adjacent property to the west where Melville's paternal uncle and his large family had lived. An inveterate hostess, she was febrile, the Melvilles knew, in her embarrassing infatuations with a brother-in-law of former President Tyler, then, for years (as Parker explains in both volumes of *Herman Melville: A Biography*), with George Duyckinck, the decorous, prim brother of Evert Duyckinck.
7. The "silly thoughts and wayward speculations" concerned his next book, *Pierre*. Mrs. Morewood's gifts were Harriet Martineau's *The Hour and the Man* (1841) and Edward George Bulwer-Lytton's *Zanoni* (1842).
8. French Protestant refugees from France in the 16th century began weaving silk in Spitalfield, near Brick Lane in London, and by the 1700s gorgeous silks were woven there.
9. Duyckinck had sent Melville a clipping about the sinking of the *Ann Alexander* by a whale off Chile, a sensation especially in the largest whaling states of New York and Massachusetts. The news arrived in the United States in a copy of the Panama *Herald* of October 16, 1851 (see Parker, *Melville*, 1.877–78 and *Correspondence* 208).
1. A heavy hammering tool, like a maul.

Why did'nt you send me that inestimable item of "Herman de Wardt" before?[2] Oh had I but had that pie to cut into! But that & many other fine things doubtless are omitted. All one can do is to pick up what chips he can buy round him. They have no Vatican[3] (as you have) in Pittsfield here. * * *

To Nathaniel Hawthorne

ARROWHEAD November 17, 1851

Your letter[4] was handed me last night on the road going to Mr. Morewood's, and I read it there. Had I been at home, I would have sat down at once and answered it. In me divine magnanimities are spontaneous and instantaneous—catch them while you can. The world goes round, and the other side comes up. So now I can't write what I felt. But I felt pantheistic then—your heart beat in my ribs and mine in yours, and both in God's. A sense of unspeakable security is in me this moment, on account of your having understood the book. I have written a wicked book, and feel spotless as the lamb. Ineffable socialities are in me. I would sit down and dine with you and all the gods in old Rome's Pantheon. It is a strange feeling—no hopefulness is in it, no despair. Content—that is it; and irresponsibility; but without licentious inclination. I speak now of my profoundest sense of being, not of an incidental feeling.

Whence come you, Hawthorne? By what right do you drink from my flagon of life? And when I put it to my lips—lo, they are yours and not mine. I feel that the Godhead is broken up like the bread at the Supper, and that we are the pieces. Hence this infinite fraternity of feeling. Now, sympathizing with the paper, my angel turns over another page. You did not care a penny for the book. But, now and then as you read, you understood the pervading thought that impelled the book—and that you praised. Was it not

2. Duyckinck's second enclosure about "Herman [*possibly* Norman] de Wardt" is unidentified. Scholar Jay Leyda conjectured an allusion to Wynkyn de Worde's *The Boke of Keruynge* (*Log* 1.431) a 1508 book on carving that includes a brief instruction about whalemeat, which would fit with Melville's comment that he wanted to "cut into" it (de Worde's book was not reprinted until 1867, however). Whatever the inestimable item was, it clearly contained some more of the sort of "random allusions to whales" Melville had been accumulating for his "Extracts" at the start of *Moby-Dick*.
3. Library. Duyckinck's great book collection went largely to the New York Public Library, where it was dispersed. His manuscript material, kept more nearly intact, has proved inexhaustible. As late as 1990 Parker found an unknown Melville letter in a folder of undated letters from unidentified correspondents, and long-printed texts of some documents still contain mistranscriptions.
4. The biographical context of this letter is outlined in *Correspondence* (1993, 210–11), and more fully detailed in Ch. 1 of Parker's *Melville*, Vol. 2. From evidence in a letter and in a newspaper article, we now know that Melville and Hawthorne had met twice that month, first on November 4 at the house in Lenox of the lawyer Charles Sedgwick, then at the Little Red Inn in Lenox, around November 14, when Melville gave Hawthorne the copy of *Moby-Dick*, which he read at once, despite the confusion of packing up for a move to the eastern part of the state, and wrote Melville about. Melville later destroyed Hawthorne's letter and the presentation copy of *Moby-Dick* was lost before or during the Hawthornes' long stay in England and Italy beginning in 1853. Parker's first volume concludes with the scene in which the two men sit all alone together through an early afternoon in the dining room at the Little Red Inn, where a writer in a newspaper said they were a source of great amusement to the Lenox gawkers, who thought the two reclusive celebrities had chosen this odd way of getting acquainted (it not being the custom for people living locally to dine at the hotel). Hawthorne knew the publication of *Moby-Dick* was imminent, but the dedication was an astounding surprise. The men had taken farewell of each other, the presentation copy of *Moby-Dick* before them, only two or three or four days before Melville received Hawthorne's praise-filled letter (see Parker 1.879–83).

so? You were archangel enough to despise the imperfect body, and embrace the soul. Once you hugged the ugly Socrates because you saw the flame in the mouth, and heard the rushing of the demon,—the familiar,—and recognized the sound; for you have heard it in your own solitudes.

My dear Hawthorne, the atmospheric skepticisms steal into me now, and make me doubtful of my sanity in writing you thus. But, believe me, I am not mad, most noble Festus![5] But truth is ever incoherent, and when the big hearts strike together, the concussion is a little stunning. Farewell. Don't write a word about the book.[6] That would be robbing me of my miserly delight. I am heartily sorry I ever wrote anything about you—it was paltry. Lord, when shall we be done growing? As long as we have anything more to do, we have done nothing. So, now, let us add Moby Dick to our blessing, and step from that. Leviathan is not the biggest fish;—I have heard of Krakens.[7]

This is a long letter, but you are not at all bound to answer it. Possibly, if you do answer it, and direct it to Herman Melville, you will missend it—for the very fingers that now guide this pen are not precisely the same that just took it up and put it on this paper. Lord, when shall we be done changing? Ah! it's a long stage, and no inn in sight, and night coming, and the body cold. But with you for a passenger, I am content and can be happy. I shall leave the world, I fell, with more satisfaction for having come to know you. Knowing you persuades me more than the Bible of our immortality.

What a pity, that, for your plain, bluff letter, you should get such gibberish! Mention me to Mrs. Hawthorne and to the children, and so, good-by to you, with my blessing.

Herman.

5. Melville defends the "gibberish" (see the last paragraph) of his letter with his biblical reference to Festus: "And as he thus spake for himself, Festus said with a loud voice, Paul, thou art beside thyself; much learning doth make thee mad. But he said, I am not mad, most noble Festus; but speak forth the words of truth and soberness" (Acts 26.24–25).
6. Hawthorne had offered to review *Moby-Dick*—just as Melville had written on *Mosses from an Old Manse* in the *Literary World*. Following Melville's directive, Hawthorne did not—although he wrote to Duyckinck on December 1, 1851: "What a book Melville has written! It gives me an idea of much greater power than his preceding ones. It hardly seemed to me that the review of it, in the *Literary World* [November 15 and 22], did justice to its best points" (*Letters, 1843–1853*, edited by Thomas Woodson, L. Neal Smith, and Norman Holmes Pearson [Columbus: Ohio State UP, 1985], p. 508).
7. A reference to *Pierre*, which he was envisioning as more profound than *Moby-Dick*. How Melville could have thought so has proved difficult for critics to understand, primarily because what he had in mind and on his writing desk at this time was not the book that was published in 1852. As Melville completed it at the end of December 1851, *Pierre* was the tragic story of the psychological awakening of a youthful idealist who makes the grotesque mistake of trying to put Christian principles into practice. In New York City, bolstered by hostile reviews and weak sales of *Moby-Dick*, the Harpers offered Melville an insulting and ruinous contract—twenty cents on the dollar after they had recouped their costs rather than the old basis of fifty cents on the dollar. Only then did Melville write into the manuscript a transparently autobiographical and ultimately suicidal account of his career. See Parker's introduction in the reconstruction of the "Kraken Edition" of *Pierre* (HarperCollins, 1995, xi–xlvi), notable for the illustrations by Maurice Sendak. The dust-jacket copy contains this hopeful passage:

> *Moby-Dick* and the reconstructed *Pierre* are at last revealed as complexly interlinked companion studies of the moods of thought—the *Typee* and *Omoo* of depth psychology. * * * Not offered as 'definitive' but as supplementary to the standard Northwestern-Newberry text, this edition of *Pierre* is a close approximation of what Melville in a letter to Hawthorne alluded to as his "kraken" book, grander than the book whose original title was *The Whale*, just as the legendary krakens were more awesome than sperm whales. [See p. 626 herein.]

I can't stop yet. If the world was entirely made up of Magians, I'll tell you what I should do. I should have a paper-mill established at one end of the house, and so have an endless riband of foolscap rolling in upon my desk; and upon that endless riband I should write a thousand—a million—billion thoughts, all under the form of a letter to you. The divine magnet is in you, and my magnet responds. Which is the biggest? A foolish question—they are *One*.

H.

Don't think that by writing me a letter, you shall always be bored with an immediate reply to it—and so keep both of us delving over a writing-desk eternally. No such thing! I sha'n't always answer your letters, and you may do just as you please.

To Sophia Peabody Hawthorne

NEW YORK CITY January 8, 1852

I have hunted up the finest Bath I could find, gilt-edged and stamped, whereon to inscribe my humble acknowledgement of your highly flattering letter of the 29th Dec.[8] It really amazed me that you should find any satisfaction in that book. It is true that some *men* have said they were pleased with it, but you are the only *woman*—for as a general thing, women have small taste for the sea. But, then, since you, with your spiritualizing nature, see more things than other people, and by the same process, refine all you see, so that they are not the same things that other people see, but things which while you think you but humbly discover them, you do in fact create them for yourself—therefore, upon the whole, I do not so much marvel at your expressions concerning Moby Dick. At any rate, your allusion for example to the "Spirit Spout" first showed to me that there was a subtile significance in that thing—but I did not, in that case, *mean* it. I had some vague idea while writing it, that the whole book was susceptible of an allegoric construction, & also that *parts* of it were—but the speciality of many of the particular subordinate allegories, were first revealed to me, after

Melville bids Hawthorne farewell because the Hawthornes were all but gone: they took the train in Pittsfield on November 21 in a fierce snowstorm, never to return to the Berkshires. Melville's "endless riband" postscript echoes his May 1, 1850, letter to Dana, in which he imagined writing only for him and spoke of feeling "welded" to him by a "Siamese link of affectionate sympathy." His intellectual, psychological, and aesthetic growth in a year and a half is measured by the two ideal readers he envisioned.

8. Sophia Hawthorne's letter was delayed by being forwarded to Melville from Pittsfield to New York, where he had gone with the completed manuscript of *Pierre* in its short form, without the sections he soon added on the hero as an author. Characteristically, Melville kept his distress over the demeaning contract the Harpers had just offered for *Pierre* out of his reply, but he may already have begun making his interpolations into the manuscript, knowing if not admitting that his career as a book writer might be over. Mrs. Hawthorne's admiration for Melville was firmly grounded in the fact that at times he had spoken almost as glowingly about her husband as she always did. Two letters newly acquired by Stanford University demonstrate the profundity of Sophia Hawthorne's interest in Melville during 1852, months after she had read *Moby-Dick,* both as a young admirer of her husband and as himself a man of incalculable qualities. For his part, Melville was rather too appreciative of Sophia as a literary-minded woman, unlike his own wife; Melville's sister Augusta quoted him on the Hawthornes in a letter to their sister Helen on January 24, 1851 (New York Public Library, Gansevoort-Lansing): "Herman says that they are the loveliest family he ever met with, or anyone can possibly imagine."

reading Mr Hawthorne's letter, which, without citing any particular examples, yet intimated the part-&-parcel allegoricalness of the whole.—But, My Dear Lady, I shall not again send you a bowl of salt water. The next chalice I shall commend, will be a rural bowl of milk.[9] * * *

Now, Madam, had you not said anything about Moby Dick, & had Mr Hawthorne been equally silent, then had I said perhaps, something to both of you about another Wonder-(-full) Book.[1] But as it is, I must be silent. How is it, that while all of us human beings are so entirely disembarrased in censuring a person; that so soon as we would praise, then we begin to feel awkward? I never blush after denouncing a man: but I grow scarlet, after eulogizing him. And yet this is all wrong; and yet we can't help it; and so we see how true was that musical sentence of the poet when he sang—"We can't help ourselves"

For tho' we know what we ought to be; & what it would be very sweet & beautiful to be; yet we can't be it. That is most sad, too. Life is a long Dardenelles,[2] My Dear Madam, the shores whereof are bright with flowers, which we want to pluck, but the bank is too high; & so we float on & on, hoping to come to a landing-place at last—but swoop! we launch into the great sea! Yet the geographers say, even then we must not despair, because across the great sea, however desolate & vacant it may look, lie all Persia & the delicious lands roundabout Damascus.

So wishing you a pleasant voyage at last to that sweet & far countree—* * *

9. Melville knew that Sophia Hawthorne knew that the chalice commended in *Macbeth* (1.7.11) was a "poison'd" one; the rural bowl of milk was *Pierre,* a book set perhaps almost entirely in the country, before this week of January, when he began enlarging it with the Pierre-as-author sections—but it was first completed as a book of ambiguous psychological depths, not a tale of innocent rustics at work and play, as Melville was ironically implying.
1. On November 7, 1851, while still in Lenox, Hawthorne had sent a copy of his new *A Wonder Book for Boys and Girls* to Malcolm, the Melvilles' first child, then not quite three years old. In a section called "Bald Summit: After the Story," written in July 1851, Hawthorne had paid a neighborly compliment (which incidentally records what he thought the title of Melville's new book was to be): "On the hither side of Pittsfield sits Herman Melville, shaping out the gigantic conception of his 'White Whale,' while the gigantic shape of Graylock looms upon him from his study-window." The father was meant to preserve the book for the son, but in the meantime he was to enjoy the compliment to himself. Hawthorne had written this surprise for Melville into his new book while Melville was preparing his own surprise by dedicating his own new book to Hawthorne.
2. Or Hellespont, a strait connecting the Sea of Marmara and the Aegean Sea.

CRITICISM

Reviews of *The Whale* and *Moby-Dick*

Many 19th-century newspapers and magazines have been lost altogether or in part through natural attrition. Some British papers were destroyed in the Blitz in World War II, and many American papers were deliberately trashed after the mid-20th century as libraries discarded old papers to save space, sometimes wrongly thinking everything had been preserved in microfilm. (One great newspaper, the New York *Tribune*, is available nationally by Inter-Library Loan only in microfilm, which lacks the "Supplements" in which important articles on Melville appear. These survive, at risk, in one hard copy at the New-York Historical Society.) This sampling of surviving reviews includes the reviews in the London *Athenæum* and the *Spectator*, the two English reviews that were reprinted and quoted in the United States so as decisively to sabotage the American reception. A few of the extremely favorable English reviews are included to suggest the delight *The Whale* occasioned in some London readers. As far as we know, such praise, except that in *The Leader*, never reached Melville's eyes: he died without knowing that along with severe criticism in London the book had received extraordinary praise. Also included are British reviews reprinted here for the first time since 1851, among them the only Scottish review yet discovered. The final item is not a review but an early (1853) retrospective article much in the spirit of the reviews. In the Bibliography see Higgins and Parker, *Herman Melville: The Contemporary Reviews*. Parker followed Jay Leyda in searching for reviews in bound newspapers and microfilms; recent review hunters, often availing themselves of newspaper databases, include Warren Broderick, John Gretchko, Kevin Hayes, Dennis Marnon, George Monteiro, Scott Norsworthy, and Richard E. Winslow.

ANONYMOUS

[The Whole Powers of the Man][†]

Herman Melville is on the right track now. His "Omoo," "Typee," and "White-jacket," gave evidence of great and peculiar powers; but the audacity of youthful genius impelled him to throw off these performances with "a too much vigour," as Dryden has it, which sometimes goes near to defeat its own end. But in "The Whale," his new work, just published, we see a concentration of the whole powers of *the man*. Resolutely discarding all

† London *Morning Herald* (October 20, 1851).

that does not bear directly on the matter in hand, he has succeeded in painting such a picture—now lurid, now a blaze with splendour—of sea life, in its most arduous and exciting form, as for vigour, originality, and interest, has never been surpassed.

ANONYMOUS

[A Credit to His Country][†]

To convey an adequate idea of a book of such various merits as that which the author of "Typee" and "Omoo" has here placed before the reading public, is impossible in the scope of a review. High philosophy, liberal feeling, abstruse metaphysics popularly phrased, soaring speculation, a style as many-coloured as the theme, yet always good, and often admirable; fertile fancy, ingenious construction, playful learning, and an unusual power of enchaining the interest, and rising to the verge of the sublime, without overpassing that narrow boundary which plunges the ambitious penman into the ridiculous: all these are possessed by Herman Melville, and exemplified in these volumes.

In the first chapter, bearing the title of "Loomings," we are introduced to the author, who on its threshold desires us to call him Ishmael. The very name being significant of a propensity to wander, we are prepared for an adventurer's acquaintance.

We have said that the writer is philosophically playful, and we will back his opening chapter, descriptive of New York, with its disquisitions on men's motives, the sea, nay water in the abstract as well as the concrete, against the same amount of prose in any book of fiction for the last dozen years, with a couple of exceptions, which we shall keep to ourselves. * * *

The portraits of these men, which you can see must have been taken from the life, and that they are the types of a class, are exquisitely finished. The signing ship's articles, by our hero and Queequeg, with the latter's fast, or ramadan, and the reasoning thereon, to which that ceremony gives rise, will well repay perusal. Captain Ahab, who is the hero of the whaling voyage, the commander of the Pequod, and thereafter the soul of the romance, is now introduced.

We will not weaken the effect which must be produced upon every one fortunate enough to obtain this work, by such brief extracts as we could here give: suffice it to say, that the fierce monomaniac, Ahab, has long pursued in the vast southern ocean a white whale, of unparalleled ferocity, size, and cunning. Not only has this monster of the deep baffled him, but in his last voyage has added to the destruction of his boats and stores a fearful mutilation; no less than the tearing off with its fearful jaws of the old whaler-captain's leg. The deficient limb is characteristically supplied by a supplemental piece of fish ivory, whereon the fierce old whale-hunter supports himself, steadied, when on deck, by a couple of socket-holes made in the ship's floor on each side of the vessel, at convenient holding-distance from the shrouds of the mizenmast. As a sample of Herman Melville's learning, we may refer to the chapter headed "Cetology," in the second volume; and that we have not overrated his dramatic ability for

† London *Morning Advertiser* (October 24, 1851).

producing a prose poem, read the chapter on the "whiteness of the whale," and the scene where Ahab nails the doubloon to the mast, as an earnest of the reward he will give to the seamen, who just "sights" "Moby Dick," the white whale, the object of his burning and unappeasable revenge. Then come whale adventures wild as dreams, and powerful in their cumulated horrors. Now we have a Carlylism of phrase, then a quaintness reminding us of Sir Thomas Brown[e], and anon a heap of curious out-of-the-way learning after the fashion of the Burton who "anatomised" "melancholy." Mingled with all this are bustle, adventure, battle and the breeze. In brief the interest never palls, although we are free to confess that in the latter scenes of Ahab's fierce madness we were fain to exclaim, "Somewhat too much of this!" * * *

Did space permit us we might be tempted to the injustice of giving more of the defence [of whalehunters]; as it is, we can only again refer the reader to the volumes, than which three more honourable to American literature, albeit issued in London, have not yet reflected credit on the country of Washington Irving, Fenimore Cooper, Dana, Sigourney, Bryant, Longfellow, and Prescott.[1]

ANONYMOUS

[An Ill-Compounded Mixture]†

This is an ill-compounded mixture of romance and matter-of-fact. The idea of a connected and collected story has obviously visited and abandoned its writer again and again in the course of composition. The style of his tale is in places disfigured by mad (rather than bad) English; and its catastrophe is hastily, weakly, and obscurely managed.[1] The second title—"Moby Dick"—is the name given to a particular sperm whale, or white sea monster, more malignant and diabolical even than the sperm whale in general is known to be. This ocean fiend is invested with especial horrors for our ship's crew;—because, once upon a time, a conflict with him cost their Captain a limb. Captain Ahab had an ivory leg made,—took an oath of retribution,—grew crazy,—lashed himself up into a purpose of cruising in quest of his adversary,—and bound all who sailed with him to stand by him in his wrath. With this cheerful Captain, on such a wise and Christian voyage of discovery, went to sea Ishmael, the imaginary writer of this narrative.

Frantic though such an invention seems to be, it might possibly have been accepted as the motive and purpose of an *extravaganza* had its author been consistent with himself. Nay, in such a terrible cause—when Krakens

1. William Hickling Prescott (1796–1859), historian and author of basic sources on Central and South America for many Americans, the *History of the Conquest of Mexico* (1843) and *The Conquest of Peru* (1847), both influenced by the epic narration of Sir Walter Scott's historical romances. The most popular American writers Washington Irving (1783–1859) and James Fenimore Cooper (1789–1851). Probably Richard Henry Dana Jr. (1815–1882), although his father, Richard Henry Dana Sr. (1787–1879) was known in England as a poet. Lydia Huntley Sigourney (1791–1865), Connecticut poet. William Cullen Bryant (1794–1878), poet, known in the United States as owner and editor of the New York *Evening Post*. Henry Wadsworth Longfellow (1807–1882), poet and Harvard professor of languages.

† London *Athenæum* (October 25, 1851).

1. This sentence, based on the absence of the "Epilogue" in *The Whale*, was quoted twice in the United States and alluded to at least two other times, but no one in the United States knew that the British reviewers had not read the "Epilogue."

and Typhoons and the wonders of Mid-Ocean, &c. &c. were the topics and toys to be arranged and manoeuvred—we might have stretched a point in admission of electrical verbs and adjectives as hoarse as the hurricane. There is a time for everything in imaginative literature;—and, according to its order, a place—for rant as well as for reserve; but the rant must be good, honest, shameless rant, without flaw or misgiving. The voice of "the storm wind Euroclydon" must not be interrupted by the facts of Scoresby and the figures of Cocker.[2] Ravings and scraps of useful knowledge flung together salad-wise make a dish in which there may be much surprise, but in which there is little savour. The real secret of this patchiness in the present case is disclosed in Mr. Melville's appendix; which contains such an assortment of curious quotations as Southey might have wrought up into a whale-chapter for 'The Doctor,'—suggesting the idea that a substantial work on the subject may have been originally contemplated.[3] Either Mr. Melville's purpose must have changed, or his power must have fallen short. The result is, at all events, a most provoking book,—neither so utterly extravagant as to be entirely comfortable, nor so instructively complete as to take place among documents on the subject of the Great Fish, his capabilities, his home and his capture. Our author must be henceforth numbered in the company of the incorrigibles who occasionally tantalize us with indications of genius, while they constantly summon us to endure monstrosities, carelessnesses, and other such harassing manifestations of bad taste as daring or disordered ingenuity can devise.

The opening of this wild book contains some graphic descriptions of a dreariness such as we do not remember to have met with before in marine literature. Sick of shore, Ishmael, the narrator, resolves to go to sea in a whaler; and on his way to Nantucket with that object, he is detained at New Bedford. The following passage will give gentlemen who live at home—as the song says—a new idea of taking their ease in their inn.—

> "Having a night, a day * * * and they began capering about most obstreperously [*sic*]." [Ch. 2, paras. 3–9, and Ch. 3, paras. 1–21, condensed]

The dark-complexioned harpooner turned out to be a cannibal, one Queequeg,—as sweet-tempered a savage as if he had been a prize vegetarian. It seemed odd enough to find Miss Martineau[4] in her "Eastern Travel" professing that "she had never rested till she had mastered the religious idea involved in cannibalism,"—but Mr. Melville's impersonation of the virtues and humanities which are to light up and relieve his terrible story is yet odder as a selection. The Battas, who, as Sir Stamford Raffles assures us,[5] eat their progenitors when the latter are sixty years old, are henceforth not beyond the reach of *réhabilitation*:—nay, those most dismal of Gnomes,

2. Edward Coker (1631–1675), English arithmetician.
3. Melville took the idea of prefacing his book with extracts from *The Doctor* (1834–1847), a loosely connected miscellany by Robert Southey (1774–1843), poet laureate for three decades. Melville's knowledge of Southey's prose and poetry has not been adequately explored.
4. Harriet Martineau (1802–1876), English author of *Eastern Life, Present and Past* (London, 1848).
5. Sir Stamford Raffles (1781–1826), governor of Java before the British returned it to the Dutch, published *The History of Java* (1817), just before becoming lieutenant governor of Sumatra. By the time of *Moby-Dick* the Battas of Sumatra had become notorious as cannibals who ate their enemies piece by piece, keeping them alive as long as possible, then decapitating them and making drinking vessels of their skulls and decorating their huts with skulls and teeth of their victims; they were said to treat their wives and children as slaves and to sell them when the chance arose.

the aborigines who devour clay, may now expect their laureate and their apologist. To such lengths will a craving for effect carry a sane man!

We have little more to say in reprobation or in recommendation of this absurd book,—having detailed its leading incident. Mr. Melville has been on former occasions characterized by us as one who thoroughly understands the tone of sea superstition. There is a wild humorous poetry in some of his terrors which distinguishes him from the vulgar herd of fustian-weavers. For instance, his interchapter on "The Whiteness of the Whale" is full of ghostly suggestions for which a Maturin or a Monk Lewis[6] would have been thankful. Mr. Melville has to thank himself only if his horrors and his heroics are flung aside by the general reader, as so much trash belonging to the worst school of Bedlam literature,—since he seems not so much unable to learn as disdainful of learning the craft of an artist.

ANONYMOUS

[A Singular Medley]†

This sea novel is a singular medley of naval observation, magazine article writing, satiric reflection upon the conventionalisms of civilized life, and rhapsody run mad. So far as the nautical parts are appropriate and unmixed, the portraiture is truthful and interesting. Some of the satire, especially in the early parts, is biting and reckless. The chapter-spinning is various in character; now powerful from the vigorous and fertile fancy of the author, now little more than empty though sounding phrases. The rhapsody belongs to wordmongering where ideas are the staple; where it takes the shape of narrative or dramatic fiction, it is phantasmal—an attempted description of what is impossible in nature and without probability in art; it repels the reader instead of attracting him.

The elements of the story are a South Sea whaling voyage, narrated by Ishmael, one of the crew of the ship Pequod, from Nantucket. Its "probable" portions consist of the usual sea matter in that branch of the industrial marine; embracing the preparations for departure, the voyage, the chase and capture of whale, with the economy of cutting up, &c., and the peculiar discipline of the service. This matter is expanded by a variety of digressions on the nature and characteristics of the sperm whale, the history of the fishery, and similar things, in which a little knowledge is made the excuse for a vast many words. The voyage is introduced by several chapters in which life in American seaports is rather broadly depicted.

The "marvellous" injures the book by disjointing the narrative, as well as by its inherent want of interest, at least as managed by Mr. Melville. In the superstition of some whalers, (grounded upon the malicious foresight which occasionally characterizes the attacks of the sperm fish upon the boats sent to capture it,) there is a *white* whale which possesses supernatural power. To capture or even to hurt it is beyond the art of man; the

6. Matthew Gregory Lewis (1775–1818), English author of the sexually lurid *The Monk* (1796). Charles Robert Maturin (1782–1824), Irish author of a Gothic novel Hawthorne read, *Melmoth the Wanderer* (1820), the hero of which sells his soul to the devil.

† London *Spectator* (October 25, 1851), reprinted in the New York *International Magazine* (December 1851).

skill of the whaler is useless; the harpoon does not wound it; it exhibits a contemptuous strategy in its attacks upon the boats of its pursuers; and happy is the vessel where only loss of limb, or of a single life, attends its chase. Ahab, the master of the Pequod—a mariner of long experience, stern resolve, and indomitable courage, the high hero of romance, in short, transferred to a whale-ship—has lost his leg in a contest with the white whale. Instead of daunting Ahab, the loss exasperates him; and by long brooding over it his reason becomes shaken. In this condition he undertakes the voyage; making the chase of his fishy antagonist the sole object of his thoughts, and, so far as he can without exciting overt insubordination among his officers, the object of his proceedings.

Such a groundwork is hardly natural enough for a regular-built novel, though it might form a tale, if properly managed. But Mr. Melville's mysteries provoke wonder at the author rather than terror at the creation; the soliloquies and dialogues of Ahab, in which the author attempts delineating the wild imaginings of monomania, and exhibiting some profoundly speculative views of things in general, induce weariness or skipping; while the whole scheme mars, as we have said, the nautical continuity of story—greatly assisted by various chapters of a bookmaking kind.

Perhaps the earliest chapters are the best, although they contain little adventure. Their topics are fresher to English readers than the whale-chase, and they have more direct satire. One of the leading personages in the voyage is Queequeg, a South Sea Islander, that Ishmael falls in with at New Bedford, and with whom he forms a bosom friendship.

> "Queequeg was a native of Kokovoko * * * I'll die a Pagan." [Ch. 12, paras. 1–4]

The strongest point of the book is its "characters." Ahab, indeed, is a melodramatic exaggeration, and Ishmael is little more than a mouthpiece; but the harpooners, the mates, and several of the seamen, are truthful portraitures of the sailor as modified by the whaling service. The persons ashore are equally good, though they are soon lost sight of. The two Quaker owners are the author's means for a hit at the religious hypocrisies. Captain Bildad, an old sea-dog, has got rid of everything pertaining to the meeting-house save an occasional "thou" and "thee." Captain Peleg, in American phrase "professes religion." The following extract exhibits the two men when Ishmael is shipped.

> "I began to think * * * to the fiery pit, Captain Peleg.'" [Ch. 16, paras. 54–65]

It is a canon with some critics that nothing should be introduced into a novel which it is physically impossible for the writer to have known: thus, he must not describe the conversation of miners in a pit if they *all* perish. Mr. Melville hardly steers clear of this rule, and he continually violates another, by beginning in the autobiographical form and changing ad libitum into the narrative. His catastrophe overrides all rule: not only is Ahab, with his boat's-crew, destroyed in his last desperate attack upon the white whale, but the Pequod herself sinks with all on board into the depths of the illimitable ocean. Such is the go-ahead method.

ANONYMOUS

[People Who Delight in Mulligatawny]†

There are people who delight in mulligatawny. They love curry at its warmest point. Ginger cannot be too hot in the mouth for them. Such people, we should think, constitute the admirers of Herman Melville. He spices his narrative with uncommon courage, and works up a story amazingly. If you love heroics and horrors he is your man. Sit down with him on a winter's eve, and you'll find yourself calling for candles before the night sets in. If you desire your hair to stand on end in a natural Brutus, or your teeth to chatter in unnatural discord, listen to what this man of strange lands and strange waters has to tell, and your wishes will be fulfilled. You will have a supper for a very long night's digestion. * * *

ANONYMOUS

[A Most Extraordinary Work]‡

The Whale is a most extraordinary work. There is so much eccentricity in its style and in its construction, in the original conception and in the gradual development of its strange and improbable story, that we are at a loss to determine in what category of works of amusement to place it. It is certainly neither a novel nor a romance, although it is made to drag its weary length through three closely printed volumes, and is published by Bentley, who, *par excellence*, is the publisher of the novels of the fashionable world, for who ever heard of novel or romance without a heroine or a single love scene? The plot of the narrative is scarcely worthy of the name, as it hangs entirely on the inveterate pursuit by a monomaniac old Captain after a certain humpbacked whale, who in some previous voyage had bitten off one of his legs, and whose destruction he had bound himself and his crew by terrible oaths to accomplish, in revenge for the injury he had himself sustained. The tragical catastrophe, which innumerable signs, omens, and superstitious warnings are constantly predicting to the infatuated commander, is the wreck of the ship, and the loss of the whole crew in the frantic attack that is made upon the invincible white whale.

The story has merit, but it is a merit *sui generis*,[1] and does not consist in the work either when viewed as a whole or with reference to the arrangement of its separate parts. The plot is meagre beyond comparison, as the whole of the incident might very conveniently have been comprised in half of one of these three interminable volumes. Nevertheless, in his descriptions of character, in his analysis of the motives of actions, and in the novelty of the details of a whaling expedition, the author has evinced not only a considerable knowledge of the human heart, combined with a thorough acquaintance with the subject he is handling, but a rare versatility

† London *News of the World* (November 2, 1851).
‡ London *Britannia* (November 8, 1851).
1. Not like anything else (Latin)

of talent. The crew of the Pequod, the inharmonious name given to the whaler, is composed of mariners of all countries and all colours, from the civilised British sailor to the savage and cannibal harpooner of the South Sea Islands. In describing the idiosyncracies of all these different castes of men our author has evinced acuteness of observation and powers of discrimination, which would alone render his work a valuable addition to the literature of the day. The monomaniac Captain Ahab, whose whole soul, to the exclusion of every other idea, is bent upon the destruction of "Moby Dick," the nickname of the whale who robbed him of his leg, is a most eccentric conception, and is well contrasted with the character of his common-place mates, Starbuck, Stubb, and Flask. Queequeg, the cannibal harpooner, notwithstanding his man-eating propensities, is made a most interesting hero amongst whale-slayers, and in the curious details of this heathen's worship of his idol, "Yojo," our author has shown that he has a fund of humour at command. Tashtego, the unmixed Indian, and Daggoo, the coal-black negro slave, are excellent types of their class, and by no means common-place characters. These original sketches constitute as we have said the principal merit of the work, but in the latter half of the third volume, the action of the story, which had halted considerably through the preceding chapters, assumes all at once an exciting interest, which is as gratifying as it is unexpected. The three days' chase of the destructive white whale, whose attempted capture had lured so many mariners to their destruction, are most graphically described. The following account of the approach of the boats on the first day, when after months of pursuit the watch on the forecastle had at last descried the dreaded antagonist, is characteristic of the author's style:—

> Soon all the boats but Starbuck's were dropped * * * streaming like pennons. [Ch. 133, paras. 15–16]

The concluding paragraph of the last chapter, in which the white whale, after spurning the small fry of boats from which harpoons are darted into it on all sides, shoots itself against the advancing prows of the vessel which it staves in, is at once so grand, so awful, and so harrowing, that we quote the paragraph:—

> The harpoon was darted; * * * as it rolled five thousand years ago. [Ch. 135, paras. 59–62]

The first and second volumes are spun out with long descriptions of the various cetacious tribes, which do now, and have at different periods of time inhabited the ocean. The information these chapters convey may be important to naturalists or whalers, but will have little interest for the general reader. Bating[2] a few Americanisms, which sometimes mar the perspicuity and the purity of the style, the language of the work is appropriate and impressive; and the stirring scenes with which the author concludes are abundant evidence of the power he possesses of making his narrative intensely interesting.

2. Barring, excluding.

ANONYMOUS

[Fascination No Criticism Will Thwart][†]

Want of originality has long been the just and standing reproach to American literature; the best of its writers were but second-hand Englishmen. Of late some have given evidence of originality; not *absolute* originality, but such genuine outcoming of the American intellect as can be safely called national. Edgar Poe, Nathaniel Hawthorne, Herman Melville are assuredly no British offshoots; nor is Emerson—the *German* American that he is! The observer of this commencement of an American literature, properly so called, will notice as significant that these writers have a wild and mystic love of the supersensual, peculiarly their own. To move a horror skilfully, with something of the earnest faith in the Unseen, and with weird imagery to shape these Phantasms so vividly that the most incredulous mind is hushed, absorbed—to do this no European pen has apparently any longer the power—to do this American literature is without a rival. What *romance* writer can be named with Hawthorne? Who knows the terrors of the seas like Herman Melville?

The Whale—Melville's last book—is a strange, wild, weird book, full of poetry and full of interest. To use a hackneyed phrase, it is indeed "refreshing" to quit the old, wornout pathways of romance, and feel the sea breezes playing through our hair, the salt spray dashing on our brows, as we do here. One tires terribly of ballrooms, dinners, and the incidents of town life! One never tires of Nature. And there is Nature here, though the daring imagery often grows riotously extravagant.

Then the ghostly terrors which Herman Melville so skilfully evokes, have a strange fascination. In vain Reason rebels. Imagination is absolute. Ordinary superstitions related by vulgar pens have lost their power over all but the credulous; but Imagination has a credulity of its own respondent to power. So it is with Melville's superstitions: we believe in them imaginatively. And here we will take the occasion to introduce the reader to a splendid passage from our greatest prose writer, descriptive of the superstitious nature of sailors—(you divine that we are to quote from De Quincey).[1] He says they are all superstitious. "Partly, I suppose, from *looking out so much upon the wilderness of waves empty of human life,* for mighty solitudes are generally fear-haunted and fear-peopled; such, for instance, as the solitudes of forests where, in the absence of human forms and ordinary human sounds, are discerned forms more dusky and vague not referred by the eye to any known type, and sounds imperfectly intelligible. Now, the sea is often peopled amidst its ravings with what seem innumerable human voices, 'ancestral voices prophesying war';[2] often times laughter mixes from a distance (seeming to come also from distant times as well as distant places) with the uproar of waters; and, doubtless, shapes of fear or shapes of beauty not less awful are at times seen upon the waves by the diseased eye of the sailor. Finally, the interruption

† London *Leader* (November 8, 1851).

1. The reviewer condenses this passage from De Quincey, perhaps from the March 1818 *Tait's Magazine* "Sketches of Life and Manners, from the Autobiography of an English Opium-Eater."
2. From "Kubla Khan" (1816), by Samuel Taylor Coleridge (1772–1834).

habitually of all ordinary avenues to information about the fate of their dearest relatives; the consequent agitation which must often possess those who are reëntering upon home waters; and the sudden burst, upon stepping ashore, of *heart-shaking news in long-accumulated arrears*—these are circumstances which dispose the mind to look out *for relief towards signs and omens as one way of breaking the shock by dim anticipations*."

This passage is a fit prelude to the thrilling pages of Melville's *Whale*. The book is not a romance, nor a treatise on Cetology. It is something of both: a strange, wild work with the tangled overgrowth and luxuriant vegetation of American forests, not the trim orderliness of an English park. Criticism may pick many holes in this work; but no criticism will thwart its fascination. As we mean you to read it and relish it, we shall give no hint of the story: an extract or so by way of whet to the appetite is all you must expect. * * *

There is a chapter on the "Whiteness of the Whale" which should be read at midnight, alone, with nothing heard but the sounds of the wind moaning without, and the embers falling into the grate within. * * *

ANONYMOUS

[No Fayaway in It. Alas!]†

"Moby Dick" is the name of a fabulous white whale of the Northern regions of the Pacific, and in this, his last book Mr Melville has woven around this cumbrous bulk of romance, a large and interesting web of narrative, information, and sketches of character and scenery, in a quaint though interesting style, and with an easy, rollicking freedom of language and structure, characteristic of himself. What the author does not know about the sea, is not worth knowing, and there is not an experience of sea life, but he has the happy power of surrounding with romance. This book, and all hitherto written by the author, are as much superior to the sea books of Marryatt, as are the latter to those of the blanket weeklies. But there is one painful thought connected with the tale. There is no Fayaway in it. Alas! fickle and forgetful Melville, that thou shouldst ever forget the gentle native who gave herself to thee in her far-off, savage home, and take to wantoning with "the monsters of the bubbling deep!"

ANONYMOUS

[Not Worth the Money Asked for It]‡

We have read nearly one half of this book, and are satisfied that the London Athenæum is right in calling it "an ill-compounded mixture of romance and matter-of-fact." It is a crazy sort of affair, stuffed with conceits and oddities of all kinds, put in artificially, deliberately and affectedly, by the side of strong, terse and brilliant passages of incident and description. The

† Springfield, Massachusetts *Republican* (November 17, 1851).
‡ Boston *Post* (November 20, 1851).

Athenæum's notice throughout seems to us a fair one, and we copy the greater portion for the sake of economy and good taste:

> The style of his tale is in places disfigured by mad (rather than bad) English[1] . . . Our author must be henceforth numbered in the company of the incorrigibles who occasionally tantalize us with indications of genius, while they constantly summon us to endure monstrosities, carelessnesses, and other such harassing manifestations of bad taste as daring or disordered ingenuity can devise.

After giving an interesting and powerfully written extract, the Athenæum resumes:—

> The dark-complexioned harpooner turned out to be a cannibal, one Queequeg . . . Mr Melville has to thank himself only if his horrors and his heroics are flung aside by the general reader, as so much trash belonging to the worst school of Bedlam literature—since he seems not so much unable to learn as disdainful of learning the craft of an artist.

The production under notice is now issued by the Harpers in a handsome bound volume for *one dollar and fifty cents*—no mean sum, in these days. It seems to us that our publishers have gone from one extreme to the other, and that instead of publishing good books in too cheap a form, they are issuing poor books, in far too costly apparel. "The Whale" is not worth the money asked for it, either as a literary work or as a mass of printed paper. Few people would read it more than once, and yet it is issued at the usual cost of a standard volume. Published at *twenty five cents*, it might do to buy, but at any higher price, we think it a poor speculation.

"H."

[A Primitive Formation of Profanity and Indecency]†

The name given to this burly volume reminds us of an observation of Burton in his Anatomy of Melancholy, where he says that it is a kind of policy in these days to prefix a fantastical title to a book which is to be sold, because as larks come down to a day-net, many readers will tarry and stand gazing like silly passengers[1] at an antic picture in a painter's shop, that will not look at a judicious piece. There are harlequin writers at this day as ready as in Burton's time to make themselves Merry-andrews and Zanies, in order to raise the wind of curiosity about their literary wares.

In the volume before us there are some of the queerest specimens of ground and lofty tumblings in the literary line, to which the world has been lately treated. Up to the middle of the book the writer is half the time on his head, and the other half dancing a pirouette on one toe. By the time these *outré* gayeties are a little spent, the reader gets an inkling that Moly-Dick [*sic*] is a very famous and most deadly Monster, a

1. The *Post* here quoted what the *Athenæum* said about the ending; then the entire *Post* review was reprinted in the Boston *Statesman* on November 22, 1851.

† New York *Independent* (November 20, 1851).

1. Passersby.

Sperm Whale of an uncommon magnitude and malignity, having as many lives as a cat, and all of them immortal. After this the realities and the fabrications of whaling life are dashed into with a bold hand; and mixed with a great deal of myth and mystery, there are exciting descriptions, curious information, and strange adventures, which would have not a shade of probability, were not truth in whaling life often stranger than fiction.

The writer evinces the possession of powers that make us ashamed of him that he does not write something better and freer from blemishes. And yet we doubt if he could, for there is a primitive formation of profanity and indecency that is ever and anon shooting up through all the strata of his writings; and it is this which makes it impossible for a religious journal heartily to commend any of the works of this author which we have ever perused. Let his mind only turn on the poles of truth, and be fixed with the desire to do good rather than to tickle and amuse by the exposure of his foolish vagaries, and few could do more than the author of Moly-Dick [*sic*] to furnish instructive literary aliment for the Sons of the Sea.

The Judgment day will hold him liable for not turning his talents to better account, when, too, both authors and publishers of injurious books will be conjointly answerable for the influence of those books upon the wide circle of immortal minds on which they have written their mark. The book-maker and the book-publisher had better do their work with a view to the trial it must undergo at the bar of God.

ANONYMOUS

[Not Lacking Much of Being a Great Work]†

This mere announcement of the book's and the author's name will prepare you in a measure for what follows; for you know just as well as we do that Herman Melville is a practical and practised sea-novelist, and that what comes from his pen will be worth the reading. And so indeed is "Moby-Dick," and not lacking much of being a great work. How it falls short of this, we shall presently endeavour to show. Let us in the first place briefly describe it.

It treats then mainly of whales, whaling, whalers, and whaling-men—incidentally it touches on mythology, sharks, religion, South Sea islanders, philosophy, cannibalism and curiosity shops. The writer uses the first person in narrating his tale, without however any attempt at making himself its hero. He was (or says he was, which is the same thing) but a seaman on board the vessel whose voyage he relates, and a consequent eye-witness of the strange characters on board her. Foremost amongst these is the Captain, in the conception of whose part lies the most original thought of the whole book, stamping it decidedly as the production of

† New York *Albion* (November 22, 1851). The *Albion* was unique, a paper written in New York for British visitors or expatriates by a British staff (especially in these early years of its existence). This review provides the best hint of how the British reviewers might have responded to *Moby-Dick* if the text of the English edition had ended with Melville's "Epilogue," although comparisons are not truly valid because the reviewer in the *Albion* was reading the uncensored American text, which retained, among other passages, the slights against royalty that had been cut from the English edition.

a man of genius. This Captain, a Nantucketer, Ahab by name, has lost a leg; it was snapped off by Moby-Dick, in the course of a boat adventure with an individual sperm-whale of the most dangerous kind, whose peculiar appearance, and repeated escapes from harpooneers, together with the amount of destruction done by him, had earned him a nick-name and made him a terror in the trade. The bodily and mental anguish endured by Capt. Ahab had, ere the commencement of our tale, converted him into a monomaniac, whose sole and absorbing object in life was revenge on Moby-Dick. The *Pequod* of Nantucket is outfitted under his command for a new voyage, the officers and crew shipping, as usual, in quest of oil and gain therefrom, whilst their commander is bent on circumnavigating the globe, in hopes of satiating his thirst for vengeance. At times the subordinates murmur at his palpable neglect of their interests; but his undaunted courage and authoritative air, and their own superstitious fears of him, prevail over every other consideration.

> Aye, Starbuck; aye, my hearties * * * go draw the great measure of grog. [Ch. 36, paras. 32–34]

The idea of even a nautical Don Quixote chasing a particular fish from ocean to ocean, running down the line of the Equator, or rushing from Torrid to Temperate zones—this may seem intolerably absurd. But the author clearly shows the *possibility* of such a search being successful, which is more than sufficient motive.

> Now, to any one not fully acquainted * * * without prospect of a meeting. [Ch. 44, paras. 4 and 7]

A variety of interesting details proves the personal identity of whales; and the author, not without reason, thus apostrophises a set of Cetacean braves.

> But not only did each of these famous whales * * * or Sylla to the classic scholar. [Ch. 45, para. 5]

A deadly strife, then, between Capt. Ahab and Moby-Dick, is the vein of romance woven through the varied wanderings of the good ship *Pequod* and her crew, and to which the reader is brought back from matter-of-fact details of the fishery, from abstruse and sceptical and comical speculations on men and things, from hand-breadth escapes, and from thrilling adventures. The book opens with the writer's personal search for a berth on ship-board, at New Bedford and Nantucket, and closes with the total loss of the *Pequod* in the Pacific, the fated vessel being deliberately run into by Moby-Dick, just as the *Ann Alexander* was lately sunk in the same seas by a malicious sperm whale, as mentioned in our columns a few weeks since. It is a singular coincidence that Mr. Melville should have wound up with this catastrophe, and that its truthfulness should have met such sad and immediate confirmation. Be it further noted that "Moby-Dick" was published in London, before the fate of the *Ann Alexander* could have been known there.

Not only is there an immense amount of reliable information here before us; the *dramatis personæ*, mates, harpooneers, carpenters, and cooks, are all vivid sketches done in the author's best style. What they do, and how they look, is brought to one's perception with wondrous elaborateness of detail; and yet this minuteness does not spoil the broad outline of each. It

is only when Mr. Melville puts words into the mouths of these living and moving beings, that his cunning fails him, and the illusion passes away. From the Captain to the Cabin-boy, not a soul amongst them talks pure seaman's lingo; and as this is a grave charge, we feel bound to substantiate it—not by an ill-natured selection of isolated bits, but by such samples as may be considered an average. We pass by Capt. Ahab for a few moments, and take his mates. Starbuck is the Chief; Ahab had nailed a sixteen-dollar gold doubloon to the main-mast as a prize for the first man that sighted Moby-Dick.

> No fairy fingers can have pressed the gold, * * * He goes below; let me read. [Ch. 99, para. 8]

The soliloquy of Stubb, the second Mate—a bold, jolly tar as ever flung harpoon—at the moment when Moby-Dick rushes headlong on the *Pequod*, is ludicrous in the extreme.

> Stand not by me, but stand under me * * * Oh, Flask, for one red cherry ere we die! [Ch. 135, para. 53]

Flask, the third mate, happily for us says little; but the Carpenter thus mutters to himself over a new bone leg, that he is making for Capt. Ahab.

> Oh! I don't wonder he looked so scornful at me! * * * as brewery-men go round collecting old beer barrels, to fill 'em up again. [Ch. 108, last para.]

But there is no pleasure in making these extracts; still less would there be in quoting anything of the stuff and nonsense spouted forth by the crazy Captain; for so indeed must nine-tenths of his dialogue be considered, even though one bears in mind that it has been compounded in a maniac's brain from the queer mixture of New England conventicle phraseology with the devilish profanity too common on board South-Sea Whalers. The rarely-imagined character has been grievously spoiled, nay altogether ruined, by a vile overdaubing with a coat of book-learning and mysticism; there is no method in his madness; and we must needs pronounce the chief feature of the volume a perfect failure, and the work itself inartistic. There is nevertheless in it, as we have already hinted, abundant choice reading for these who can skip a page now and then, judiciously; and perhaps, when one's mind is made up to disregard the continuous interest, the separate portions may be better relished. We offer a sample or two of the best. There is for instance both truth and satire in the following peep into a particular mood of mind.

> There are certain queer times and occasions in this strange mixed affair we call life when a man takes this whole universe for a vast practical joke, though the wit thereof he but dimly discerns, and more than suspects that the joke is at nobody's expense but his own * * * I now regarded the whole voyage of the *Pequod*, and the great White Whale its object. [Ch. 49, para. 1]

It is to be hoped that this sketch of one of the owners of the *Pequod* was not drawn from the life at Nantucket.

> Now Bildad, I am sorry to say, * * * like the worn nap of his broad-brimmed hat. [Ch. 16, para. 45]

We conclude with part of a clever chapter on the honour and glory of whaling.

> There are some enterprises * * * why not the prophet? [Ch. 82, paras. 1–7]

Mr. Melville has crowded together in a few prefatory pages a large collection of brief and pithy extracts from authors innumerable, such as one might expect as headings for chapters. We do not like the innovation. It is having oil, mustard, vinegar, and pepper served up as a dish, in place of being scientifically administered sauce-wise.

[HORACE GREELEY?]

[Melville's Whaliad, the Epic of Whaling][†]

Everybody has heard of the tradition which is said to prevail among the old salts of Nantucket and New-Bedford, of a ferocious monster of a whale, who is proof against all the arts of harpoonery, and who occasionally amuses himself with swallowing down a boat's crew without winking. The present volume is a "Whaliad," or the Epic of that veritable old leviathan, who "esteemeth iron as straw, and laughs at the spear, the dart, and the habergeon," no one being able to "fill his skin with a barbed iron, or his head with fish-hooks." Mr. Melville gives us not only the romance of his history, but a great mass of instruction on the character and habits of his whole race, with complete details of the wily stratagems of their pursuers.

The interest of the work pivots on a certain Captain Ahab, whose enmity to Moby-Dick, the name of the whale-demon, has been aggravated to monomania. In one rencounter with this terror of the seas, he suffers a signal defeat; loses a leg in the contest; gets a fire in his brain; returns home a man with one idea; feels that he has a mission; that he is predestined to defy his enemy to mortal strife; devotes himself to the fulfillment of his destiny; with the persistence and cunning of insanity gets possession of another vessel; ships a weird, supernatural crew of which Ishmael, the narrator of the story, is a prominent member; and after a "wild huntsman's chase" through unknown seas, is the only one who remains to tell the destruction of the ship and the doomed Captain Ahab by the victorious, indomitable Moby-Dick.

The narrative is constructed in Herman Melville's best manner. It combines the various features which form the chief attractions of his style, and is commendably free from the faults which we have before had occasion to specify in this powerful writer. The intensity of the plot is happily relieved by minute descriptions of the most homely processes of the whale fishery. We have occasional touches of the subtle mysticism, which is carried to such an inconvenient excess in Mardi, but it is here mixed up with so many tangible and odorous realities, that we always safely alight from the excursion through mid-air upon the solid deck of the whaler. We are recalled to this world by the fumes of "oil and blubber," and are made to think more of the contents of barrels than of allegories. The work is also full of episodes, descriptive of strange and original phases of character. One of them is given in the commencement of the volume, showing how

† New York *Tribune* (November 22, 1851). For Horace Greeley, see p. 477.

"misery makes a man acquainted with strange bed-fellows." We must pass over this in which the writer relates his first introduction to Queequeg, a South Sea cannibal, who was his chum at a sailor boarding house in New-Bedford and afterward his bosom friend and most devoted confederate. We will make room for the characteristic chapter, which describes the ripening of their acquaintance into the honeymoon of friendship:

> Returning to the Spouter-Inn * * * and all the world. [Ch. 10, paras. 1–9]

But we must go out to sea with Ishmael, if we would witness his most remarkable exploits. We are now, then, in the midst of things, and with good luck, may soon get a sight of Moby-Dick. Meantime, we may beguile our impatience with the description of a rope, on which Melville gives us a touch of his quaint moralizings.

> With reference to the whaling scene * * * not a harpoon, by your side. [Ch. 60, paras. 1–10]

We are now ready to kill our first whale. Here is the transaction in full:

KILLING A WHALE.

> If to Starbuck * * * eyeing the vast corpse he had made. [Ch. 61, paras. 1–22]

At last, Moby-Dick, the object of such long vigilant, and infuriate search, is discovered. We can only give the report of

THE CHASE—FIRST DAY.

> That night, in the mid-watch * * * as desolate sounds from out ravines. [Ch. 133, paras. 1–32]

Here we will retire from the chase, which lasts three days, not having a fancy to be in at the death. We part with the adventurous philosophical Ishmael, truly thankful that the whale did not get his head, for which we are indebted for this wildly imaginative and truly thrilling story. We think it the best production which has yet come from that seething brain, and in spite of its lawless flights, which put all regular criticism at defiance, it gives us a higher opinion of the author's originality and power than even the favorite and fragrant first-fruits of his genius, the never-to-be-forgotten Typee.

[EVERT A. DUYCKINCK]

[A Friend Does His Christian Duty][†]

A difficulty in the estimate of this, in common with one or two other of Mr. Melville's books, occurs from the double character under which they

† New York *Literary World* (November 22, 1851). This was the second notice. The first, on November 15, was mainly concerned with the coincidental arrival of news that the whaleship *Ann Alexander* had been sunk in the Pacific by a whale. See "Hawthorne and His Mosses" (p. 544 herein) and "Melville's Letters at the Time of *Moby-Dick*" (p. 559 herein) for a sense of Duyckinck's importance to Melville through this time. Hawthorne reproached Duyckinck for this review, saying bluntly that he thought the *Literary World* had hardly done justice to *Moby-Dick*.

present themselves. In one light they are romantic fictions, in another statements of absolute fact. When to this is added that the romance is made a vehicle of opinion and satire through a more or less opaque allegorical veil, as particularly in the latter half of Mardi, and to some extent in this present volume, the critical difficulty is considerably thickened. It becomes quite impossible to submit such books to a distinct classification as fact, fiction, or essay. Something of a parallel may be found in Jean Paul's[1] German tales, with an admixture of Southey's Doctor. Under these combined influences of personal observation, actual fidelity to local truthfulness in description, a taste for reading and sentiment, a fondness for fanciful analogies, near and remote, a rash daring in speculation, reckless at times of taste and propriety, again refined and eloquent, this volume of Moby Dick may be pronounced a most remarkable sea-dish—an intellectual chowder of romance, philosophy, natural history, fine writing, good feeling, bad sayings—but over which, in spite of all uncertainties, and in spite of the author himself, predominates his keen perceptive faculties, exhibited in vivid narration.

There are evidently two if not three books in Moby Dick rolled into one. Book No. I. we could describe as a thorough exhaustive account admirably given of the great Sperm Whale. The information is minute, brilliantly illustrated, as it should be—the whale himself so generously illuminating the midnight page on which his memoirs are written—has its level passages, its humorous touches, its quaint suggestion, its incident usually picturesque and occasionally sublime. All this is given in the most delightful manner in "The Whale." Book No. 2 is the romance of Captain Ahab, Queequeg, Tashtego, Pip & Co., who are more or less spiritual personages talking and acting differently from the general business run of the conversation on the decks of whalers. They are for the most part very serious people, and seem to be concerned a great deal about the problem of the universe. They are striking characters withal, of the romantic spiritual cast of the German drama; realities of some kinds at bottom, but veiled in all sorts of poetical incidents and expressions. As a bit of German melodrama, with Captain Ahab for the Faust of the quarter-deck, and Queequeg with the crew, for Walpurgis night[2] revellers in the forecastle, it has its strong points, though here the limits as to space and treatment of the stage would improve it. Moby Dick in this view becomes a sort of fishy moralist, a leviathan metaphysician, a folio Ductor Dubitantium, in fact, in the fresh water illustration of Mrs. Malaprop, "an allegory on the banks of the Nile."[3] After pursuing him in this melancholic company over a few hundred squares of latitude and longitude, we begin to have some faint idea of the association of whaling and lamentation, and why blubber is popularly synonymous with tears.

The intense Captain Ahab is too long drawn out; something more of *him* might, we think, be left to the reader's imagination. The value of this kind of writing can only be through the personal consciousness of the

1. Jean Paul Richter (1763–1825), German Romantic novelist.
2. The night of the witches' celebration, known best from Goethe's *Faust*.
3. Mrs. Malaprop, a character in Richard Brinsley Sheridan's "The Rivals" (1775), blunders astonishingly in her use of words (named from the French *mal à propos*, "inappropriate"). *Ductor Dubitantium; or The Rule of Conscience* (1660), casuistical analysis of dozens of situations that require a moral decision, by Jeremy Taylor, Church of England priest under Oliver Cromwell.

reader, what he brings to the book; and all this is sufficiently evoked by a dramatic trait or suggestion. If we had as much of Hamlet or Macbeth as Mr. Melville gives us of Ahab, we should be tired even of their sublime company. Yet Captain Ahab is a striking conception, firmly planted on the wild deck of the Pequod—a dark disturbed soul arraying itself with every ingenuity of material resources for a conflict at once natural and supernatural in his eye, with the most dangerous extant physical monster of the earth, embodying, in strongly drawn lines of mental association, the vaster moral evil of the world. The pursuit of the White Whale thus interweaves with the literal perils of the fishery—a problem of fate and destiny—to the tragic solution of which Ahab hurries on, amidst the wild stage scenery of the ocean. To this end the motley crew, the air, the sky, the sea, its inhabitants are idealized throughout. It is a noble and praiseworthy conception; and though our sympathies may not always accord with the train of thought, we would caution the reader against a light or hasty condemnation of this part of the work.

Book III., appropriating perhaps a fourth of the volume, is a vein of moralizing, half essay, half rhapsody, in which much refinement and subtlety, and no little poetical feeling, are mingled with quaint conceit and extravagant daring speculation. This is to be taken as in some sense dramatic; the narrator throughout among the personages of the Pequod being one Ishmael, whose wit may be allowed to be against everything on land, as his hand is against everything at sea. This piratical running down of creeds and opinions, the conceited indifferentism of Emerson, or the run-a-muck style of Carlyle is, we will not say dangerous in such cases, for there are various forces at work to meet more powerful onslaught, but it is out of place and uncomfortable. We do not like to see what, under any view, must be to the world the most sacred associations of life violated and defaced.

We call for fair play in this matter. Here is Ishmael, telling the story of this volume, going down on his knees with a cannibal to a piece of wood, in the second story fire-place of a New-Bedford tavern, in the spirit of amiable and transcendent charity, which may be all very well in its way; but why dislodge from heaven, with contumely, "long-pampered Gabriel, Michael and Raphael." Surely Ishmael, who is a scholar, might have spoken respectfully of the Archangel Gabriel, out of consideration, if not for the Bible (which might be asking too much of the school), at least for one John Milton, who wrote Paradise Lost.

Nor is it fair to inveigh against the terrors of priestcraft, which, skilful though it may be in making up its woes, at least seeks to provide a remedy for the evils of the world, and attribute the existence of conscience to "hereditary dyspepsias, nurtured by Ramadans"—and at the same time go about petrifying us with imaginary horrors, and all sorts of gloomy suggestions, all the world through. It is a curious fact that there are no more bilious people in the world, more completely filled with megrims and head shakings, than some of these very people who are constantly inveighing against the religious melancholy of priestcraft.

So much for the consistency of Ishmael—who, if it is the author's object to exhibit the painful contradictions of this self-dependent, self-torturing agency of a mind driven hither and thither as a flame in a whirlwind, is, in a degree, a successful embodiment of opinions, without securing from us, however, much admiration for the result.

With this we make an end of what we have been reluctantly compelled to object to this volume. With far greater pleasure, we acknowledge the acuteness of observation, the freshness of perception, with which the author brings home to us from the deep, "things unattempted yet in prose or rhyme,"[4] the weird influences of his ocean scenes, the salient imagination which connects them with the past and distant, the world of books and the life of experience—certain prevalent traits of manly sentiment. These are strong powers with which Mr. Melville wrestles in this book. It would be a great glory to subdue them to the highest uses of fiction. It is still a great honor, among the crowd of successful mediocrities which throng our publishers' counters, and know nothing of divine impulses, to be in the company of these nobler spirits on any terms.

ANONYMOUS

[Too Much for Our Money]†

Such a mass of information about the whale was probably never brought together in one book before, certainly never in a work of fiction. "Moby-Dick," as a medium of information, cannot be found fault with. As a work of fiction it is liable to the objection which presents itself to all Melville's writings since "Typee." Typee was just perfect. In the attempt to make the rest better, and improve upon perfection, we think he runs into the grave error of giving us altogether too much for our money. He spreads his subject out beyond all reasonable bounds; until the scene becomes altogether too long for the motive, and the finest writing will not prevent it from being tiresome. If any writer of the present day could play with his subject, after this fashion, with impunity, it would be Melville; for his style is a rare mixture of power and sweetness, and, indeed, under the influence of the least excitement becomes as truly poetry as if every line were measured for verse, and the fine madness of his soul poured out in lyric flow instead of straightened into prose. But, even his power of expression, and elegance of style, will not redeem a book from being prosy after the natural interest of its subject has been exhausted. More than five acts of the best tragedy would be too much for mere mortals to bear.

ANONYMOUS

[Information: The Only Redeeming Point]‡

These volumes—tastefully done up in blue, white, and gold, with a huge sperm whale sprawling on the back of each volume—contain a strange mixture of smart observations, quaint philosophy, American vulgarisms, and grandiose writing. The author's object is to detail, in the form of a novel, the natural history of the sperm whale, and the leading incidents

4. John Milton, *Paradise Lost* I.16.
† New York *Parker's Journal* (November 22, 1851).
‡ Edinburgh *Evening Courant* (November 25, 1851).

of a fishing voyage in the South Seas. The information thus afforded is the only redeeming point in the work, for assuredly both the story and the style are sufficiently absurd.

A vessel called "The Pequod" sails from Nantucket on a whaling cruise. She has scarcely left the harbour when the crew discover that they have a madman for their captain. The skipper, however, turns out to be mad only on one point, and his monomania consists in this. On a previous voyage a large whale had by a stroke of its tail, so injured Captain Ahab's leg that the limb required to be amputated. The whale, it seems, was well known in the southern latitudes for its enormous size and extraordinary fierceness, and went by the name of "Moby Dick." The author assures us that some particular whales are known to the fishers, and have been pursued for years by various ships without success, like a marked stag that, season after season, sets all stalkers at defiance. Now, Captain Ahab had resolved to be revenged on Moby Dick. This was his sole, absorbing idea. The interests of his employers, the safety of his crew, and every other consideration gave way to this.

> "No love-lorn swain, in lady's bower,
> E'er panted for the appointed hour"[1]

as did Captain Ahab to fall in with Moby Dick. We have a full account of this marvellous mariner, and the various incidents of the Pequod's cruise, but our faith in the narrative is somewhat shaken, when at last we find that, after years of persevering search, Captain Ahab does encounter Moby Dick, but, instead of realising his long-cherished projects of vengeance, he, his ship, and all the crew, are sent to the bottom of the ocean by a wisk of Moby's tail.

As a specimen of what is really interesting in the book, we may quote the following description of the "Try-works," or boiling apparatus, on board an American whaler, and fortunately the passage is wonderfully free from the slang phraseology or bombastic inflatedness of style, one or other of which too often disfigures Mr Melville's pages. * * *

A. OAKEY HALL

[A Book Which Enhances Melville's Fame]†

Putman [Putnam] has published some snobbish books for the "upper ten" * * * But Harpers last week gives us *Moby Dick, or the Whale*, "Herman Melville's" last nautical romance. It is a book which well sustains his reputation as a tale writer and sketcher, while it enhances in a high degree his fame as an original thinker and illustrator of every day sailor men, and every day sailor scenes. You remember the account recently given by a Captain Deblers [Deblois], of his hunting a white whale, and its sinking the

1. Sir Walter Scott, *The Lady of the Lake*, canto 5.9.

† New Orleans *Commercial Bulletin* (November 27, 1851). Under the pseudonym Hans Yorkel, A. Oakey Hall was contributing a remarkable series of letters telling residents of New Orleans all sorts of things that were going on in New York to this paper. Hall, later district attorney and mayor of New York City, then a young intimate of the Duyckinck circle, idolized Melville and put valuable information in his letters to New Orleans, including the news (startling but plausible) that Melville had written *White-Jacket* "in a score of sittings."

ship, after it had broken all the boats? Very curiously Mr. Melville's story is upon the vengeance with which a captain pursued a whale, with a similar catastrophe occurring for a finale. But beyond, far beyond the story, Mr. "Melville's" book is a valuable one for its accounts of the manners, haunts, and natural history of Leviathan. He paraphrases Job, to the affirmative nod of his readers, "Canst thou pull out Leviathan with a hook?"[1]

[GEORGE RIPLEY?]

[A Pregnant Allegory . . . Illustrating the Mystery of Human Life][†]

A new work by Herman Melville, entitled *Moby Dick; or, The Whale*, has just been issued by Harper and Brothers, which, in point of richness and variety of incident, originality of conception, and splendor of description, surpasses any of the former productions of this highly successful author. *Moby Dick* is the name of an old White Whale; half fish and half devil; the terror of the Nantucket cruisers; the scourge of distant oceans; leading an invulnerable, charmed life; the subject of many grim and ghostly traditions. This huge sea monster has a conflict with one Captain Ahab; the veteran Nantucket salt comes off second best; not only loses a leg in the affray, but receives a twist in the brain; becomes the victim of a deep, cunning monomania; believes himself predestined to take a bloody revenge on his fearful enemy; pursues him with fierce demoniac energy of purpose; and at last perishes in the dreadful fight, just as he deems that he has reached the goal of his frantic passion. On this slight framework, the author has constructed a romance, a tragedy, and a natural history, not without numerous gratuitous suggestions on psychology, ethics, and theology. Beneath the whole story, the subtle, imaginative reader may perhaps find a pregnant allegory, intended to illustrate the mystery of human life. Certain it is that the rapid, pointed hints which are often thrown out, with the keenness and velocity of a harpoon, penetrate deep into the heart of things, showing that the genius of the author for moral analysis is scarcely surpassed by his wizard power of description.

In the course of the narrative the habits of the whale are fully and ably described. Frequent graphic and instructive sketches of the fishery, of sea-life in a whaling vessel, and of the manners and customs of strange nations are interspersed with excellent artistic effect among the thrilling scenes of the story. The various processes of procuring oil are explained with the minute, painstaking fidelity of a statistical record, contrasting strangely with the weird, phantom-like character of the plot, and of some of the leading personages, who present a no less unearthly appearance than the witches in Macbeth. These sudden and decided transitions form a striking feature of the volume. Difficult of management, in the highest

1. Job 41.1. The word in the *Commercial Bulletin* is *book*—probably a typo but possibly a play on words.

† *Harper's New Monthly Magazine* (December 1851). It seems likely that Ripley wrote *Harper's* review, and it is possible he wrote the *Tribune* review, although it is not signed with his usual "R." George Ripley (1802–1880), a Massachusetts-born Transcendentalist, earned wide respect during his long career in New York City as a reviewer on Horace Greeley's *Tribune* and Harper's *Magazine*.

degree, they are wrought with consummate skill. To a less gifted author, they would inevitably have proved fatal. He has not only deftly avoided their dangers, but made them an element of great power. They constantly pique the attention of the reader, keeping curiosity alive, and presenting the combined charm of surprise and alternation.

The introductory chapters of the volume, containing sketches of life in the great marts of Whalingdom, New Bedford and Nantucket, are pervaded with a fine vein of comic humor, and reveal a succession of portraitures, in which the lineaments of nature shine forth, through a good deal of perverse, intentional exaggeration. To many readers, these will prove the most interesting portions of the work. Nothing can be better than the description of the owners of the vessel, Captain Peleg and Captain Bildad, whose acquaintance we make before the commencement of the voyage. The character of Captain Ahab also opens upon us with wonderful power. He exercises a wild, bewildering fascination by his dark and mysterious nature, which is not at all diminished when we obtain a clearer insight into his strange history. Indeed, all the members of the ship's company, the three mates, Starbuck, Stubbs, and Flash, the wild, savage Gayheader, the case-hardened old blacksmith, to say nothing of the pearl of a New Zealand harpooner, the bosom friend of the narrator—all stand before us in the strongest individual relief, presenting a unique picture gallery, which every artist must despair of rivaling.

The plot becomes more intense and tragic, as it approaches toward the denouement. The malicious old Moby Dick, after long cruisings in pursuit of him, is at length discovered. He comes up to the battle, like an army with banners. He seems inspired with the same fierce, inveterate cunning with which Captain Ahab has followed the traces of his mortal foe. The fight is described in letters of blood. It is easy to foresee which will be the victor in such a contest. We need not say that the ill-omened ship is broken in fragments by the wrath of the weltering fiend. Captain Ahab becomes the prey of his intended victim. The crew perish. One alone escapes to tell the tale. Moby Dick disappears unscathed, and for aught we know, is the same "delicate monster," whose power in destroying another ship is just announced from Panama.

[AUGUSTUS K. GARDNER?]

[Fresh and Buoyant as Ever][†]

Fresh and buoyant as ever, our old friend dashes out in another realm of sea-life, with "a long pull, and a strong pull," rows us away from brick wall and homely thoughts into the ocean of fancy. But the scenes into which we are taken are not all imaginative. The web upon which the work is constructed is undoubtedly a creation of the brain, but the scenes therein are the daily occurrences in the life of the adventurous whaler. And this is evidently the object of the writer—to plainly portray the daily adventures and dangers of the hardy sailor in quest of the great leviathan. In

† Newark, New Jersey *Daily Advertiser* (December 5, 1851). Gardner, the son of the editor of the *Advertiser*, was a friend of Melville's and sometimes his doctor.

the course of the volume, we have a description of the varieties of the whale; their various characteristics and values; the numerous difficulties attending upon their capture and the statistics of the vessels and men engaged in this branch of the marine; the capital invested therein, and the returns made upon it. Insomuch the work is of practical value. We doubt if ever the whale has been so scientifically described by any preceding writer, and his account is worthy to be, and probably will be, incorporated into all future naval histories. It is astonishing that among all the myriads that have frequently seen these monsters of the deep, none, till now, have been able to describe them intelligibly, not to say correctly. A semi-marvellous narrative or tale is the link which connects the various chapters and retains the interest of the reader until the very last page.

Notwithstanding the numerous works which Melville has written, and upon similar subjects too, it is very noticeable how little he repeats himself. Even Cooper in successive tales continued many of his characters, but here we have constant novelty drawn by an apparently inexhaustible pen. Every character seems pictured by a daguerreotype, so natural are the features, and so clear the outlines.

With each succeeding book too, there is an improvement in the artistic character of the work; in some respects this is not a gain to the general reader, not that there is a want of freshness, but we think the metaphysical discussions, half earnest and half banter, might well be omitted. This fault may be glaring in Mardi, though but little observable in this, which we think will increase the popularity of the author.

ANONYMOUS

[A "Many-Sided" Book][†]

Our friend Melville's books begin to accumulate. His literary family increases rapidly. He had already a happy and smiling progeny around him, but lo! at the appointed time another child of his brain, with the accustomed signs of the family, claims our attention and regard. We bid the book a hearty welcome. We assure the "happy father" that his "labors of love" are no "love's labor lost."

We confess an admiration for Mr. Melville's books, which, perhaps, spoils us for mere criticism. There are few writers, living or dead, who describe the sea and its adjuncts with such true art, such graphic power, and with such powerfully resulting interest. "Typee," "Omoo," "Redburn," "Mardi," and "White Jacket," are equal to anything in the language. They are things of their own. They are results of the youthful experience on the ocean of a man who is at once philosopher, painter, and poet. This is not, perhaps, a very unusual mental combination, but it is not usual to find such a combination "before the mast." So far Mr. Melville's early

† New York *Spirit of the Times* (December 6, 1851). The editor was the remarkable William T. Porter, publisher of extraordinary stories set in the American backwoods, now often ignorantly denigrated as "southwestern humor" or "Big Bear literature." Porter, like Melville, did not make invidious distinctions between hunting stories and literature. "Our friend Melville" may be a mere bon-vivant flourish, but Porter and Melville may well have been acquainted in the late 1840s. The bracketed page number refers to this Norton Critical Edition.

experiences, though perhaps none of the pleasantest to himself, are infinitely valuable to the world. We say *valuable* with a full knowledge of the terms used; and, not to enter into details, which will be fresh in the memory of most of Mr. Melville's readers, it is sufficient to say that the humanities of the world have been quickened by his works. Who can forget the missionary *exposé*—the practical good sense which pleads for "Poor Jack," or the unsparing but just severity of his delineations of naval abuses, and that crowning disgrace to our navy—flogging? Taken as matters of art these books are amongst the largest and the freshest contributions of original thought and observation which have been presented in many years. Take the majority of modern writers, and it will be admitted that however much they may elaborate and rearrange the stock of ideas pre-existent, there is little added to the "common fund." Philosophers bark at each other—poets sing stereotyped phrases—John Miltons re-appear in innumerable "Pollock's Courses of Time"[1]—novelists and romances stick to the same overdone incidents, careless of the memories of defunct Scotts and Radcliffs,[2] and it is only now and then when genius, by some lucky chance of youth, ploughs deeper into the soil of humanity and nature, that fresher experiences—perhaps at the cost of much individual pain and sorrow—are obtained; and the results are books, such as those of Herman Melville and Charles Dickens. Books which are living pictures, at once of the practical truth, and the ideal amendment: books which mark epochs in literature and art.

It is, however, not with Mr. Melville generally as a writer that we have now to deal, but with "Moby Dick, or the Whale," in particular; and at first let us not forget to say that in "taking titles" no man is more felicitous than our author. Sufficiently dreamy to excite one's curiosity, sufficiently explicit to indicate some main and peculiar feature. "Moby Dick" is perhaps a creation of the brain—"The Whale" a result of experience; and the whole title a fine polished result of both. A title may be a truth or a lie. It may be clap-trap, or true art. A bad book may have a good title, but you will seldom find a good book with an inappropriate name.

"Moby Dick, or the Whale," is all whale. Leviathan is here in full amplitude. Not one of your museum affairs, but the real, living whale, a bona-fide, warm-blooded creature, ransacking the waters from pole to pole. His enormous bulk, his terribly destructive energies, his habits, his food, are all before us. Nay, even his lighter moods are exhibited. We are permitted to see the whale as a lover, a husband, and the head of a family. So to speak, we are made guests at his fire-side; we set our mental legs beneath his mahogany, and become members of his interesting social circle. No book in the world brings together so much whale. We have his history, natural and social, living and dead. But Leviathan's natural history, though undoubtedly valuable to science, is but a part of the book. It is in the personal adventures of his captors, their toils, and, alas! not unfrequently their wounds and martyrdom, that our highest interest is excited. This mingling of human adventure with new, startling, and striking objects and pursuits, constitute one of the chief charms of Mr. Melville's books. His

1. *The Course of Time* (1827), a phenomenally popular ten-book blank verse poem by Robert Pollok, a Scottish Presbyterian minister.
2. The novels of Sir Walter Scott and Ann Radcliffe were frequently imitated.

present work is a drama of intense interest. A whale, "Moby Dick"—a dim, gigantic, unconquerable, but terribly destructive being, is one of the persons of the drama. We admit a disposition to be critical on this character. We had doubts as to his admissibility as an actor into dramatic action, and so it would seem had our author, but his chapter, "The Affidavit," disarms us; all improbability or incongruity disappears, and "Moby Dick" becomes a living fact, simply doubtful at first, because he was so new an idea, one of those beings whose whole life, like the Palladius or the Sea-serpent, is a romance, and whose memoirs unvarnished are of themselves a fortune to the first analist or his publisher.

"Moby Dick, or the Whale," is a "many-sided" book. Mingled with much curious information respecting whales and whaling there is a fine vein of sermonizing, a good deal of keen satire, much humor, and that too of the finest order, and a story of peculiar interest. As a romance its characters are so new and unusual that we doubt not it will excite the ire of critics. It is not tame enough to pass this ordeal safely. Think of a monomaniac whaling captain, who, mutilated on a former voyage by a particular whale, well known for its peculiar bulk, shape, and color—seeks, at the risk of his life and the lives of his crew, to capture and slay this terror of the seas! It is on this idea that the romance hinges. The usual staple of novelists is entirely wanting. We have neither flinty-hearted fathers, designing villains, dark caverns, men in armor, nor anxious lovers. There is not in the book any individual, who, at a certain hour, "*might have been seen*" ascending hills or descending valleys, as is usual. The thing is entirely new, fresh, often startling, and highly dramatic, and with those even, who, oblivious of other fine matters, scattered with profusest hand, read for the sake of the story, must be exceedingly successful.

Our space will not permit us at present to justify our opinions by long quotations; but, at the risk of doing Mr. Melville injustice by curtailment, let us turn to the chapter headed "The Pequod meets the Rose Bud," p. 447 [299], in which a whaling scene is described with infinite humor. * * *

Did our limits permit we would gladly extract the fine little episode, contained in the chapter called "The Castaway," as a favorable specimen of Mr. Melville's graphic powers of description. But we must conclude by strongly recommending "Moby Dick, or the Whale," to all who can appreciate a work of exceeding power, beauty, and genius.

EDWARD FORBES

[Purposeless and Unequal Doings][†]

Thrice unlucky Herman Melville! Three goodly volumes has he written, with the main purpose of honouring the Cachalot, and disparaging the *Mysticete*, and his publisher has sent them into the world in brilliant covers of blue and white, with three Greenland whales stamped in gold on their binding. How they spout! Three unmistakeable Mysticeti, sloping

† London *Literary Gazette* (December 6, 1851). Forbes was professor of natural history at the University of Edinburgh. This review first printed anonymously was included in Forbes's posthumous *Literary Papers* (1855).

heads, and jaws fringed with long combs of baleen. Shade of extinguished spermaceti, how thy light has been put out by the bookbinders!

This is an odd book, professing to be a novel; wantonly eccentric; outrageously bombastic; in places charmingly and vividly descriptive. The author has read up laboriously to make a show of cetological learning. He has turned over the articles Whale, Porpoise, Cachalot, Spermaceti, Baleen, and their relatives, in every Encyclopædia within his reach. Thence he has resorted to the original authorities—a difficult and tedious task, as every one who has sought out the sources of statements set forth without reference in Cyclopædias knows too well. For our own part, we believe that there must have been some old original Cyclopædia, long since lost or destroyed, out of which all the others have been compiled. For when one is compared with another, it becomes too plain that one or other is a barefaced pillage and extract from a secondhand source. Herman Melville is wise in this sort of wisdom. He uses it as stuffing to fill out his skeleton story. Bad stuffing it makes, serving only to try the patience of his readers, and to tempt them to wish both him and his whales at the bottom of an unfathomable sea. If a man will light his lamp with whale oil, when gas and camphine are at hand, he must be content with a dull illumination.

The story of this novel scarcely deserves the name. The supposed author, a young sailor, resolves to join the whalers. He falls in with a strange bedfellow at starting, a picturesque savage, one Queequeg, a New Zealand prince, who has abdicated his dignities in order to see the world, and who moves through nautical society with a harpoon in his hand and a wooden god in his pocket. Mr. Melville cannot do without savages, so he makes half of his *dramatis personæ* wild Indians, Malays, and other untamed humanities. Queequeg and the writer become sworn friends. They join a whale-ship, commanded by a strange old one-legged Captain Ahab, who cherishes a mysterious purpose—no less than the intention of pursuing to death a ferocious white spermaceti whale, who has knocked no end of ships to pieces, and chewed off any number of legs, arms, and heads of whale-fishers. Ahab peregrinates the ocean in search of his enemy, for it was Moby Dick—that is the name of the whale—who abbreviated the Captain's lower extremities. What the author's original intention in spinning his preposterous yarn was, it is impossible to guess; evidently, when we compare the first and third volumes, it was never carried out. He seems to have despaired of exciting interest about a leviathan hero and a crazy whale-skipper, and when he found his manuscript sufficient for the filling up of three octavos, resolved to put a stop to whale, captain, crew, and savages by a *coup de main*. Accordingly, he sends them down to the depths of ocean all in a heap, using his milk-white spermaceti as the instrument of ruthless destruction. How the imaginary writer, who appears to have been drowned with the rest, communicated his notes for publication to Mr. Bentley is not explained. The whole affair would make an admirable subject for an Easter entertainment at Astley's.[1]

Having said so much that may be interpreted as censure, it is right that we should add a word of praise where deserved. There are sketches of scenes at sea, of whaling adventures, storms, and ship-life, equal to any

1. Popular entertainment venue in London, big enough for circus shows.

we have ever met with. A single extract will serve as an illustration. It is a description of an attack upon a whale during a squall, and the fearful consequences of the rash exploit:—

> Our sail was now set * * * an oar or a lance pole. [Ch. 48, paras. 39–49]

Mr. Herman Melville has earned a deservedly high reputation for his performances in descriptive fiction. He has gathered his own materials, and travelled along fresh and untrodden literary paths, exhibiting powers of no common order, and great originality. The more careful, therefore, should he be to maintain the fame he so rapidly acquired, and not waste his strength on such purposeless and unequal doings as these rambling volumes about spermaceti whales.

ANONYMOUS

[Talent Perverted][†]

Moby-Dick, or The Whale, by Herman Melville, (Harpers) is a strange compound of rare ability, stirring adventures, brilliant descriptions, and apparently an accurate knowledge of the nature, form, and habits of this monster of the deep, with much wild rhapsody and bad philosophy, many violations of good taste and delicacy, and we are sorry to add, frequent displays of irreligion and profanity. Had these latter features been excluded, the book would have been diminished one third in bulk, and infinitely more readable. The character of the monomaniac Captain Ahab is a novelty, and powerfully drawn, and the final catastrophe is most horrible: but it is pitiable to see so much talent perverted to sneers at revealed religion and the burlesquing of sacred passages of Holy Writ.

ANONYMOUS

[A Strange, Wild Book][‡]

This is a strange, wild book, in which there are many features of extraordinary interest and many others that might have been profitably omitted. It is a singular compound of what is true in relation to whaling and what is utterly false, and yet the volume will be eagerly read, as all the volumes of Mr. Melville have been. We hope that Mr. Melville, as he has attained to great perfection in mingling fact and fiction together, will now be satisfied with his achievements in that direction, and give us books in some other departments of literature, such as his great and various talents eminently qualify him to produce.

† New York *Churchman* (December 6, 1851).
‡ Louisville, Kentucky *Journal* (December 13, 1851).

[WILLIAM A. BUTLER]

[A Prose Epic on Whaling][†]

* * * If we were disposed on the present occasion to follow the example * * * set us by our betters, we should forthwith proceed, taking "Moby Dick, or the Whale," as our text, to indite a discourse on cetology. Such, however, is not our intention. Nor do we propose, like a veritable devil's advocate, to haul Mr. Herman Melville over the coals for any offences committed against the code of Aristotle and Aristarchus:[1] we have nothing to allege against his admission among the few writers of the present day who give evidence of some originality; but, while disposed to concede to Mr. Melville a palm of high praise for his literary excellencies, we must enter our decided protest against the querulous and cavilling innuendoes which he so much loves to discharge, like barbed and poisoned arrows, against objects that should be shielded from his irreverent wit. On this point we hope it is unnecessary to enlarge in terms of reprehension, further than to say that there are many passages in his last work, as indeed in most that Mr. Melville has written, which "dying he would wish to blot."[2] Neither good taste nor good morals can approve the "forecastle scene," with its maudlin and ribald orgies, as contained in the 40th chapter of "Moby Dick." It has all that is disgusting in Goethe's "Witches' Kitchen," without its genius.[3] * * *

Moby-Dick, or the Whale, is the narrative of a whaling voyage; and, while we must beg permission to doubt its authenticity in all respects, we are free to confess that it presents a most striking and truthful portraiture of the whale and his perilous capture. We do not imagine that Mr. Melville claims for this his latest production the same historical credence which he asserted was due to "Typee" and "Omoo;" and we do not know how we can better express our conception of his general drift and style in the work under consideration than by entitling it a prose Epic on Whaling. In whatever light it may be viewed, no one can deny it to be the production of a man of genius. The descriptive powers of Mr. Melville are unrivalled, whether the scenes he paints reveal "old ocean into tempest toss'd," or are laid among the bright hillsides of some Pacific island, so warm and undulating that the printed page on which they are so

† Washington *National Intelligencer* (December 16, 1851). Butler (1825–1902), early a member of the Duyckinck circle of New York literary men and later a successful lawyer, wrote remarkable reviews of Melville and Whitman for the Washington *National Intelligencer* and published some very popular light verse. A revealing story about him is in Parker, *Herman Melville: A Biography* 1.760–61.

1. Greek critic (220?–150 B.C.E.). Aristotle (384–322 B.C.E.), Greek author of the *Poetics*, the foundation of European aesthetic theory.
2. Samuel Johnson said of the poet James Thomson that he wrote "no line which dying he would wish to blot."
3. Personal jealousy and anger lies behind this passage. Knowing Butler and his new bride were passing through Pittsfield on a train on August 9, 1850, Melville, with Butler's friend Evert Duyckinck, boarded the car and whisked them out, Melville then driving the bride away in a buggy to the Melvill House (now the Pittsfield Country Club) where he was staying, leaving Butler to follow with Duyckinck, drawn by a slower horse. With *Typee*, Melville had become an international sex symbol, the first American writer to be so dubiously honored; for years people who met him saw him in the light of his presumed sexual experiences with the Fayaway of *Typee* or other native women. To have his bride swept from the car by a bearded sex symbol, a stranger to her although a literary lion, was excruciatingly humiliating to the young Butler and still rankled late the next year. See Parker's *Herman Melville: A Biography (1819–1851)*, pp. 760–761, for an explanation of Melville's extraordinarily excited state, his having just an hour or two earlier finished writing "Hawthorne and His Mosses."

graphically depicted seems almost to palpitate beneath the sun. Language in the hands of this master becomes like a magician's wand, evoking at will "thick-coming fancies," and peopling the "chambers of imagery" with hideous shapes of terror or winning forms of beauty and loveliness. Mr. Melville has a strange power to reach the sinuosities of a thought,[4] if we may so express ourselves; he touches with his lead and line depths of pathos that few can fathom, and by a single word can set a whole chime of sweet or wild emotions into a pealing concert. His delineation of character is actually Shakespearean—a quality which is even more prominently evinced in "Moby Dick" than in any of his antecedent efforts. Mr. Melville especially delights to limn the full-length portrait of a savage, and if he is a cannibal it is all the better; he seems fully convinced that the highest type of man is to be found in the forests or among the anthropophagi of the Fejee Islands. Brighter geniuses than even his have disported on this same fancy; for such was the youthful dream of Burke, and such was the crazy vision of Jean Jacques Ro[u]sseau.[5]

The humor of Mr. Melville is of that subdued yet unquenchable nature which spreads such a charm over the pages of Sterne. As illustrative of this quality in his style, we must refer our readers to the irresistibly comic passages scattered at irregular intervals through "Moby Dick;" and occasionally we find in this singular production the traces of that "wild imagining" which throws such a weird-like charm about the Ancient Mariner of Coleridge; and many of the scenes and objects in "Moby Dick" were suggested, we doubt not, by this ghastly rhyme. The argument of what we choose to consider as a sort of prose epic on whales, whalers, and whaling may be briefly stated as follows:

Ishmael, the pseudonymous appellative assumed by Mr. Melville in his present publication, becoming disgusted with the "tame and docile earth," resolves to get to sea in all possible haste, and for this purpose welcomes the whaling voyage as being best adapted to open to his gaze the floodgates of the oceanic wonder world; the wild conceits that swayed him were two—floating pictures in his soul of whales gliding through the waters in endless processions, and "midst them all one grand hooded phantom, like a snow hill in the air." This "grand hooded phantom," thus preternaturally impressed on his mental retina, proves to be *Moby Dick*, a great white whale, who had long been the terror of his "whaling grounds," noted for his invincible ferocity and for a peculiar snow-white wrinkled forehead, and a high pyramidical white hump on his back. It is not, however, his prodigious magnitude, nor his strange white hue, nor his deformed visage that so much invested the monster with unnatural terror, as the unexampled and intelligent malignity which he had repeatedly evinced when attacked by different whalers, so that no turbaned Turk; no hired Venetian or Malay, could smite his foes with more seeming malice. Ishmael embarks on board the whaling vessel "Pequod," whose captain, Ahab, had been previously bereft of a leg in an encounter with the terrible "Moby Dick;" a spirit of moody vindictiveness enters his soul, and he determines to be avenged upon the fell monster that had, with such intelligent and prepense

4. In his hostile, mocking review of Whitman's *Leaves of Grass* in the same paper on February 18, 1856, Butler recycled this striking phrase in describing his attempt to trail Whitman's "transcendental sinuosities of thought."
5. Jean Jacques Rousseau (1712–1778), Swiss-born French author of *Confessions* (1781–88), famous for advocating a return to primitive innocence, as Melville could be said to have done in *Typee*.

maliciousness, rendered him a cripple for life; the white whale swam before him as the incarnation of all those wicked agencies which some deep men, according to Mr. Melville, feel eating in them, till they are left living on with half a heart and half a lung; in other words, Capt. Ahab became a monomaniac, with the chase and capture of Moby-Dick for his single idea; so that all his powers were thus concentrated and intensified with a thousand-fold more potency than he could have brought to bear on one reasonable object. The "Pequod" encounters Moby Dick, and in the deadly struggle which ensues the whole crew perish save the fortunate Ishmael. On such a slender thread hangs the whole of this ingenious romance, which for variety of incident and vigor of style can scarcely be exceeded.

ANONYMOUS

[Pristine Powers and Old Extravagance]†

When the author of "Omoo" and "Typee" appeared, we were happy to hail a new and bright star in the firmament of letters. There was vast promise in these finely imagined fictions. Sea stories had been gradually waning in attraction. A vast number of respectable sailors, who never ought to have had their hands blacked in any fluid save tar, were discolouring them in ink. Cooper was not much imitated, but Marryat[1] had a shoal of clumsy followers, who believed that the public liked to read of the most ordinary naval manoeuvers told in technical language, and who imagined and let loose upon the world a swarm of *soi-disant* naval characters, who were either weak and conventional, or wildly extravagant and clumsily caricatured. Herman Melville was a man of different mettle: originality—thorough originality—was stamped upon every line he wrote. There never was a fresher author. He took up a new subject, and treated it in a new fashion. Round his readers he flung a new atmosphere, and round his fictions a new light. Herman Melville, in fact, gave the world a new sensation: springing triumphantly away from the old scenes of naval romances, abjuring the West Indies, and the English Channel, and the North Sea; recognising as classic ground neither the Common Hard nor Portsmouth Point—treating us to no exciting frigate battles—absolutely repudiating all notion of daring cuttings out of French luggers moored under batteries of tremendous power—never chasing slavers, and never being chased by pirates—inventing no mysterious corsairs, and launching no renowned privateers, Herman Melville flung himself entirely into a new naval hemisphere. The Pacific, with its eternally sunny skies and tranquil seas—the great ocean of the world—with its mysterious inhabitants—its whales, to which the whales of Greenland are babies, and its ships—worn, battered, warped, and faded ships, cruising for months and months, and years and years in that great illimitable flood—its glorious isles, too—ocean Edens—the very gardens of the south, coral girt and palm crowned, set in sparkling surf, smiled over by everlasting summer

† London *Morning Chronicle* (December 20, 1851).

1. Frederick Marryat (1792–1848), British naval officer, author of *Peter Simple* (1834) and other popular sea fiction.

skies, and fanned by never-dying summer breezes—the birth-place of a happy, mirthful, Epicurean race, living in the balmy air and the tepid seas—pure and beautiful in their wildness, loving and kind, simple and truthful—such was the semi-fairy world into the gorgeous midst of which Herman Melville, like a potent and beneficent magician, hurled his readers. The power and the skill of the new literary enchanter were at once admitted. With a bursting imagination, and an intellect working with muscles which seemed not likely soon to tire, Herman Melville bid high for a high place among the spirits of the age. There never was an author more instinct with the flush of power and the pride of mental wealth. He dashed at his pages and overflowed them with the rushing fulness of his mind. A perception of the picturesque and of the beautiful—equally powerful and equally intense—an imagination of singular force, and capable of calling up the wildest, most vivid, and most gorgeous conceptions, and a genuine, hearty, warm, and genial earnestness—in all he imagined, and in all he wrote—marked Herman Melville, not for a man of talent and a clever writer, but for a genius. And his style was just as thoroughly characteristic. Its strength, its living energy, its abounding vitality, were all his own. He seemed to write like a giant refreshed. He bounded on and on, as if irresistibly impelled by the blast of his own inspiration, and the general happiness of phrase, and the occasional flash of thought rendered in the most deliciously perfect words, were subsidiary proofs of the genuineness of the new powers which addressed the world.

But still, even in the best parts of the best books of the American sailor, there lurked an ominous presence which we hoped would disappear, but which, as we feared, has increased and multiplied. We could not shut our eyes to the fact that constantly before us we saw, like a plague spot, the tendency to rhapsody—the constant leaning towards wild and aimless extravagance, which has since, in so melancholy a degree, overflown, and, so to speak, drowned the human interest—the very possibility of human interest—in so great a portion of Herman Melville's works. First, indeed, there was but a little cloud the size of a man's hand.[2] Unhappily it has overspread the horizon, and the reader stumbles and wanders disconsolately in its gloom. It was in "Mardi" that the storm of extravagance burst fairly forth. The first volume was charming. What could be more poetic, yet life-like, than the picture of the sea-worn whaler, with her crew yearning again for a sight of a clod of dry green land—what finer than the canoe voyage—what more strangely thrilling, yet truth-like, than the falling in with the island schooner, with her grass ropes and cotton sails, drifting with two savages along the sea? So far Melville had held his fine imagination in curb. It had worked legitimately, and worked right well. It had proceeded by the eternal rules of art and the unchanging principles of the truthful and the symmetrical. But with the second volume the curb of judgment is removed. Common sense, which Herman Melville can

2. In 1 Kings 18.43, even though King Ahab is threatening to kill him, the prophet Elijah arranges a test of power, after which the prophets of Baal are slain. Elijah sends his servant to look toward the sea, but the servant returns having seen nothing. Elijah sends him "again seven times," and on the last time the man reports (in verse 44): "Behold, there ariseth a little cloud out of the sea, like a man's hand"—at which Elijah sends the servant with a message to Ahab, who hastens to his wife Jezebel with the news that her prophets are dead. She swears to kill Elijah by the next day.

depose or keep enthroned at will, was driven out by one *coup d'état*,[3] and the two last volumes are melancholy rhodomontade—half raving, half babble—animated only by the outlines of a dull cold allegory, which flits before the reader like a phantom with a veiled face, and a form which is but the foldings of vapour wreaths. You yearn for the world again—for sea and sky and timber—for human flesh, white or brown—for the solid wood of the ship and the coarse canvass of the sail—as did the whaler's crew for land and grass. What are these impalpable shadows to you? What care you for these misty phantoms of an indefinite cloud land? You want reality—you want truth—you want *vraisemblance*.[4] Close the book—there are none in the last two volumes of "Mardi."

Next, if we remember rightly, came a three-volume series of sketches called "White Jacket." They depicted life on board an American frigate in the Pacific—the severe, and in many points brutal, discipline of a Transatlantic ship of war, elaborated with such daguerreotype exactitude and finish, so swarming with the finest and minutest details, and so studded with little points never to be imagined, that you are irresistibly impelled to the conclusion that, from the first word to the last, every syllable is literal, down-right truth. Here Herman Melville rushes into the other extreme from "Mardi." In one he painted visions, in the other he engraves still life. The first is all broad, vague dashes—the second all carefully finished lines. You look at one book, as it were, through a hazy telescope with many coloured glasses—at the other, through a carefully cleaned microscope, which shows you every infinitesimal blister of the tar in the ship's seams—every fibre in a topsail haul-yard, and every hair in a topman's whisker. And yet, every now and then, even in the midst of all this Dutch painting, comes a dash at the old fashion of raving. Every now and then a startling chapter lugs you from the forecastle, or the cock-pit, or the cable-tiers, or the very run, up into the highest, bluest Empyrean—you are snatched up from bilge-water to the nectar of the Gods—you are hurried from the consideration of maggots in biscuits, to that of the world beyond the stars or the world before the flood: in one chapter there is a horrifying account of the amputation of a man's leg—in the next you are told how the great mountain peaks of the Andes raised all their organ notes to peal forth hallelujahs on the morning when the world was born.

One other work by Herman Melville divides his wildly extravagant "Mardi" from the little less extravagant fiction before us. It is called, if we remember right, "My First Voyage," and is the literally and strongly told experiences of a sailor boy on his first trip from New York to Liverpool. The work smacks strongly of reality, but it is written in a lower, less buoyant, and less confident key than the earlier fictions. It seemed to us, also, as we read it, that some, at all events, of the virtue of the author had departed, and that he knew it. He walked feebly and groped. The inward sunshine was wanting, and the strong throb of the vigorous brain was neither so full nor so steady as before.

Here, however—in "The Whale"—comes Herman Melville, in all his pristine powers—in all his abounding vigour—in the full swing of his mental energy, with his imagination invoking as strange and wild and

3. A sudden overthrow of the government by force.
4. Sense of reality.

original themes as ever, with his fancy arraying them in the old bright and vivid hues, with that store of quaint and out-of-the-way information—we would rather call it reading than learning—which he ever and anon scatters around, in, frequently, unreasonable profusion, with the old mingled opulence and happiness of phrase, and alas! too, with the old extravagance, running a perfect muck throughout the three volumes, raving and rhapsodising in chapter after chapter—unchecked, as it would appear, by the very slightest remembrance of judgment or common sense, and occasionally soaring into such absolute clouds of phantasmal unreason, that we seriously and sorrowfully ask ourselves whether this can be anything other than sheer moonstruck lunacy.

Let us put it to our readers, for example, what they think of the following as the speech of a whaling captain to his crew:—

CAPTAIN AHAB.

> 'Drink and pass! * * * hunt Moby Dick to his death!' [Ch. 36, paras. 44–50]

But it may be replied that Captain Ahab is represented as being a monomaniac. So be it: but the crew are not, and what is to be thought of such a conversation as the following amongst the hands of a whaler:—

FORECASTLE TALK.

"MATE'S VOICE FROM THE QUARTER-DECK"

> Eight bells there forward * * * showest thy black brow, Seeva! [Ch. 40, paras. 3–23]

And so on indefinitely.

But it is high time to inform our readers what they may expect to find in "The Whale." The author tells the story, as usual *in propria persona*. He determines to sail from the harbour of New Bedford on board a whaler, for a four years' cruise in the Pacific. In a sailors' tavern, roughly and powerfully drawn, he is put to sleep with a South Sea Island harpooner, a tatooed cannibal, and a Pagan who worships a wretched little black graven image called Gogo, [*sic*] and in whom Herman recognises a noble and heroic soul—insomuch, indeed, that with certain philosophic mental reservations—he does not scruple to go on his knees to Gogo, set upright in the empty grate as a shrine, and join the orisons of his South Sea acquaintance. As soon as this personage appears, the story assumes that nightmare unreality, and becomes overshadowed by that uncertain looming of imaginative recklessness, which is only here and there dispersed by the intensely-written whaling adventures, and the minute truth of the descriptions not only of the whales themselves, but of the utensils used for capturing them, and the process of cutting up the monsters and extracting the oil. Queequeg, the harpooneer, and Herman Melville embark on board the Pequod, an ancient whaler—a sort of mystic prophet of evil—a strange sepulchral voiced phantom-like man having several times warned them against the voyage in vain. All this, and in fact the entire book, except the portions we have mentioned, reads like a ghost story done with rare imaginative power and noble might of expression. The captain of the Pequod—Captain Ahab—is a mystery of mysteries. He looms out of a halo of terrors—scents prophecies,

omens, and auguries. He is an ancient mariner—an ancient whaler—and there seems on him a doom and a curse. His destiny is linked to the destiny of a certain whale—a strange horrible whale—perfectly white—an albino whale, a monster famous since the South Sea fisheries began for his ferocity, his cunning, and his strength. This white whale's name is "Moby Dick." He is held to be hundreds, if not thousands, of years old. He has ploughed the oceans before a sail was set above them. He may have been, for all Captain Ahab knows, the very whale who swallowed Jonah. Well, this whale has Captain Ahab pursued voyage after voyage. This whale he has chased, we know not how many times round the earth; to kill this whale he has devoted all his means, all his energies, all his thoughts in this world, and, so far as we can make out, is supposed to have bartered all his prospects in the next. Often has he encountered it, but Moby Dick bears a charmed life. There are scores and scores of rusted harpoons wedged deeply in his blubber. He trails miles of line behind him, until the hemp rots off and sinks in the brine. He has smashed boats by scores—drowned men by dozens. Every South Sea man knows the "white whale," and, taught by dread experience, gives him a wide berth. The sailors tell dreadful tales of him in the sleepy mid-watch. He is, in fact, a sort of ocean fiend—a tremendous *bogey* of the sea—an apparition which no one seeks but Captain Ahab, whose destiny is bound up in the doomed pursuit. So, then, the Pequod turns her battered bows to the Indian Ocean, and Captain Ahab commences his final hunt of Moby Dick. * * *

ANONYMOUS

[A Most Agreeable and Exciting Work][†]

This is a most agreeable and exciting work, in three volumes, quaintly told, but full of life and anecdote. It purports to be the history of a whaling voyage, in which that good ship the "Pequod," Captain Ahab, of Nantucket, was engaged. The names which occur in the course of the following extracts are those of certain individuals comprising the whaler's crew. Perhaps there is no employment so dangerous or exciting as that of the whale fishery; and the graphic sketches of fierce combats with monsters of the deep, as given in the three volumes now before us, afford a good idea of the perils those engaged in its pursuit encounter. * * *

ANONYMOUS

[Mr. Melville Has Survived his Reputation][‡]

Mr. Melville is evidently trying to ascertain how far the public will consent to be imposed upon. He is gauging, at once, our gullibility and our patience. Having written one or two passable extravagancies, he has considered himself privileged to produce as many more as he pleases,

† London *Reynolds's Newspaper* (December 21, 1851).
‡ New York *United States Magazine and Democratic Review* 30 (January 1852): 93.

increasingly exaggerated and increasingly dull. The field from which his first crops of literature were produced, has become greatly impoverished, and no amount of forcing seems likely to restore it to its pristine vigor. In bombast, in caricature, in rhetorical artifice—generally as clumsy as it is ineffectual—and in low attempts at humor, each one of his volumes has been an advance upon its predecessors, while, in all those qualities which make books readable, it has shown a decided retrogression from former efforts. Mr. Melville never writes naturally. His sentiment is forced, his wit is forced, and his enthusiasm is forced. And in his attempts to display to the utmost extent his powers of "fine writing," he has succeeded, we think, beyond his most sanguine expectations.

The truth is, Mr. Melville has survived his reputation. If he had been contented with writing one or two books, he might have been famous, but his vanity has destroyed all his chances of immortality, or even of a good name with his own generation. For, in sober truth, Mr. Melville's vanity is immeasurable. He will either be first among the book-making tribe, or he will be nowhere. He will centre all attention upon himself, or he will abandon the field of literature at once. From this morbid self-esteem, coupled with a most unbounded love of notoriety, spring all Mr. Melville's efforts, all his rhetorical contortions, all his declamatory abuse of society, all his inflated sentiment, and all his insinuating licentiousness.

"Typee" was undoubtedly a very proper book for the parlor, and we have seen it in company with "Omoo," lying upon tables from which Byron was strictly prohibited, although we were unable to fathom those niceties of logic by which one was patronized, and the other proscribed. But these were Mr. Melville's triumphs. "Redburn" was a stupid failure, "Mardi" was hopelessly dull, "White Jacket" was worse than either; and, in fact, it was such a very bad book, that, until the appearance of "Moby Dick," we had set it down as the very ultimatum of weakness to which its author could attain. It seems, however, that we were mistaken.

We have no intention of quoting any passages just now from "Moby Dick." The London journals, we understand, "have bestowed upon the work many flattering notices,"[1] and we should be loth to combat such high authority. But if there are any of our readers who wish to find examples of bad rhetoric, involved syntax, stilted sentiment and incoherent English, we will take the liberty of recommending to them this precious volume of Mr. Melville's.

[WILLIAM GILMORE SIMMS?]

[Grounds for a Writ *de Lunatico* against Melville][†]

In all those portions of this volume which relate directly to the whale, his appearance in the oceans which he inhabits; his habits, powers and peculiarities; his pursuit and capture; the interest of the reader will be kept

1. If this is an exact quotation, it has not been located; the words are not in the Higgins-Parker *Herman Melville: The Contemporary Reviews* and not in Parker's working version of *The New Melville Log*. Perhaps the Harpers had put out a brief advertisement not yet discovered.

† Charleston, South Carolina *Southern Quarterly Review* (January 1852). A lifelong South Carolinian, neglected now for his many historical novels that made him a popular novelist as James Fenimore Cooper's career declined, Simms (1806–1870) was a learned historian of the American Revolution and resourceful biographer of patriots.

alive, and his attention fully rewarded. We should judge, from what is before us, that Mr. Melville has as much personal knowledge of the whale as any man living, and is better able, than any man living, to display this knowledge in print. In all the scenes where the whale is the performer or the sufferer, the delineation and action are highly vivid and exciting. In all other respects, the book is sad stuff, dull and dreary, or ridiculous. Mr. Melville's Quakers are the wretchedest dolts and drivellers, and his Mad Captain, who pursues his personal revenges against the fish who has taken off his leg, at the expense of ship, crew and owners, is a monstrous bore, whom Mr. Melville has no way helped, by enveloping him in a sort of mystery. His ravings, and the ravings of some of the tributary characters, and the ravings of Mr. Melville himself, meant for eloquent declamation, are such as would justify a writ *de lunatico* against all the parties.

FRANCIS JACOX

[A Strange, Wild, Furibund Thing]†

For so successful a trader in "marine stores" as Mr. Melville, "The Whale" seemed a speculation every way big with promise. From such a master of his harpoon might have been expected a prodigious hit. There was about blubber and spermaceti something unctuously suggestive, and with him for whaleman. And his three volumes entitled "The Whale" undoubtedly contain much vigorous description, much wild power, many striking details. But the effect is distressingly marred throughout by an extravagant treatment of the subject. The style is maniacal—mad as a March hare—mowing, gibbering, screaming, like an incurable Bedlamite, reckless of keeper or strait-waistcoat. Now it vaults on stilts, and performs *Bombastes Furioso*[1] with contortions of figure, and straining strides, and swashbuckler fustian, far beyond *Pistol*[2] in that Ancient's happiest mood. Now it is seized with spasms, acute and convulsive enough to excite bewilderment in all beholders. When he pleases, Mr. Melville can be so lucid, straightforward, hearty, and unaffected, and displays so unmistakable a shrewdness, and satirical sense of the ridiculous, that it is hard to suppose that *he* can have indited the rhodomontade[3] to which we allude. Surely the man is a Doppelganger—a dual number incarnate (singular though he be, in and out of all conscience):—surely he is two single gentlemen rolled into one, but retaining their respective idiosyncrasies—the one sensible, sagacious, observant, graphic, and producing admirable matter—the other maundering, drivelling, subject to paroxysms, cramps, and total collapse, and penning exceeding many page of unaccountable "bosh." * * *

† London *New Monthly Magazine*, "American Authorship. No. IV—Herman Melville," by "Sir Nathaniel" [Francis Jacox], July 1853. The three Americans honored before Melville were Washington Irving, Richard Henry Dana (the poet father, not the sailor son), and Nathaniel Hawthorne.

1. Taking its title from Ludovico Ariosto's 16th-century Italian epic poem, *Orlando Furioso*, William Barnes Rhodes's *Bombastes Furioso: A Burlesque Tragic Opera* (1810) used comic songs to satirize the extravagances of current drama.
2. The swaggering coward is introduced as Falstaff's ensign ("Ancient") in *Henry IV* Part 2 then reappears in *Henry V* and *The Merry Wives of Windsor*.
3. Bragging, blustering language.

The story itself is a strange, wild, furibund[4] thing—about Captain Ahab's vow of revenge against one Moby Dick. * * * The climax of the three days' chase after Moby Dick is highly wrought and sternly exciting—but the catastrophe, in its whirl of waters and fancies, resembles one of Turner's later nebulous transgressions in gamboge.[5]

O author of "Typee" and "Omoo," we admire so cordially the proven capacity of your pen, that we entreat you to doff the "non-natural sense" of your late lucubrations—to put off your worser self—and to do your better, real self, that justice which its "potentiality" deserves.

4. Full of frenzy.
5. Mustard yellow. This comment is slighting but apt, if you exchange "transgressions" for a word like *triumphs*. For Melville's exposure to and love of the great oil paintings of J. M. W. Turner, see Parker (1996) 1.686 and Parker (2002) 2.341.

Aftermath of *Moby-Dick*

HERSHEL PARKER

Damned by Dollars: *Moby-Dick* and the Price of Genius†

One of Melville's younger granddaughters told her children that the price of genius was too high for a family to pay. This essay is an attempt to weigh the price of genius, the price of beauty—what it cost Melville and his family for him to give us *Moby-Dick*.

In early May 1851, when he had finished almost all of *Moby-Dick* except the concluding chapters and late insertions, Melville wrote Hawthorne about "the silent grass-growing mood in which a man *ought* always to compose," a mood that could seldom be his: "Dollars damn me; and the malicious Devil is forever grinning in upon me, holding the door ajar." Critics have tended to take these words as a playful commentary on the strains of authorship: the printer's devil, the boy who runs with copy from author to compositor, is peering into the writer's study, hands outstretched for new pages to carry to the print shop; the harassed author never has enough time quite to perfect his prose before surrendering it to the printer.

Melville went on to say that because dollars damned him, because he was so rushed, "the product is a final hash," and all his books were "botches." We have not taken Melville's own judgment seriously, partly because for a long time, during the Melville revival in the decade after 1919, the centenary of his birth, the English literary establishment has seen him as a great writer and *Moby-Dick* as a great book, not a botch, and their enthusiasm crossed the Atlantic. The wide teaching of *Moby-Dick* in colleges after World War II coincided with the triumph of a theory of literature, the New Criticism, which dictated a method of classroom teaching appropriate to a period when new colleges were being founded to accommodate the returning GIs, colleges that had to start their libraries from scratch, competing with many other new colleges doing the same thing. Old books and newspaper files were hard to buy (even as other libraries were recklessly trashing their bulky bound newspapers) and major

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manuscript collections for the nineteenth century were seldom on the market. The New Criticism required that its practitioners ignore biographical evidence as irrelevant to criticism and to see any poem or novel as a perfect work of art. This made the life of a teacher simple. Even a work that any commonsensical reader would regard as obviously the product of disparate and unresolved impulses—such as Melville's *Pierre*—could be celebrated cleverly in articles demonstrating its unity. Far more intensely did critics celebrate the unity of *Moby-Dick*. Decade after decade, critics resolutely ignored Melville's own words, and often ignored also even obvious anomalies in the text such as the momentous introduction and sudden removal of Bulkington. Of course, critics proclaimed, *Moby-Dick* was a unified work of art, not a botch.

Likewise, critics could not take seriously the possibility that dollars had really damned Melville. How could he say he was damned? Why, he had the rare satisfaction of knowing for the rest of his life that he had written a great book! Why, within three decades after his death he had ascended into the highest literary realms, compared not to J. Ross Browne the American whaler but to Sir Thomas Browne the Restoration physician and moralist, compared not to William Scoresby the whaling authority but to William Shakespeare! Almost no one celebrated *Moby-Dick* as a great book which nevertheless contained elements that the harried author had not harmonized to his own satisfaction. The conspicuous exception, Harrison Hayford's "Unnecessary Duplicates" was published as late as 1978. The New Criticism is still dominant in the study of American Literature, however disguised over the last decades as phenomenology, as structuralism, as deconstruction, as the New Historicism. Here I use long-forbidden evidence, biographical evidence, in looking at Melville's gamble that he could write a great book that would be immensely popular, and at the human consequences of that gamble.

After his return from the Pacific in 1844, Melville began the semiautobiographical *Typee* in New York City and finished it in 1845 while living with his mother and four sisters in a rented house in Lansingburgh, New York, now part of Troy, across the river and up from Albany. In 1845 the Harpers rejected his story of living with South Sea natives in the Marquesas as impossible to be true. Delayed a year, Melville's career began with that book, *Typee* (London: John Murray; New York: Wiley & Putnam, 1846). Relying on George Putnam's judgment, Wiley had rushed *Typee* into print without reading it, then promptly made Melville expurgate many sexual passages along with all the criticisms of Protestant missionaries. By late 1846 the newspapers and magazines published by the lower Protestant churches had united against him, and for the rest of his active career Melville was hounded by what we would classify as right wing Christians. (Presbyterians, a notably missionary-minded denomination, were particularly hard on Melville; that was why he recklessly made Ishmael claim to be a good Presbyterian.) Melville's career was consolidated by *Omoo* (London: John Murray; New York: Harper & Brothers, 1847), a semiautobiographical account of his experiences on his second whale ship and in the islands of Tahiti and Eimeo. The Harper brothers had been shrewd enough to snap up the successful author they had spurned, but Melville never got over his early resentment toward them and, famously mercenary, they repeatedly were unfair to him. Once he found he could run up a tab at the Wiley & Putnam

and then at the Harpers bookstore, he began buying books that he needed if he were to write his own books, regardless of the fact that he was eating up his profits in advance. On the strength of the popularity of *Omoo,* Elizabeth Shaw and her father, Lemuel Shaw, the chief justice of the Massachusetts supreme court, decided that her eleven-month engagement to Melville could be followed, in August 1847, by marriage.

Melville did not have enough money to get married. John Gretchko has discovered an ante-nuptial document that provides that Sophia Thurston, from a wealthy Bond Street family, upon her marriage to Melville's lawyer brother Allan, will loan Herman Melville $5,000 for purchase of the indenture of lease on a house on Fourth Avenue priced at $6,000. Melville's father-in-law advanced him $2,000, a thousand of which apparently went as part payment on the twenty-one-year indenture of lease. That left a thousand dollars for Melville to use in moving himself, his bride, his mother, and his four sisters from Lansingburgh to Manhattan, setting up housekeeping there, and living on until it ran out. Maria and her daughters and Herman, Allan, and their wives moved in at the same time. By 1850 there were four live-in servants. It is not yet clear what the payments listed as "rent" amounted to or who paid them, and it is not clear how the brothers divided the living expenses, including the payment to servants. No one has done a good job with equivalents, not even the U.S. government with its inflation charts, that would suggest $2,000 in 1847 would equal $50-some thousand. But in terms of comparable New York City property values, $2,000 in 1847 would buy something roughly like $5,000,000 or more now: you have to multiply not by twenty-five or thirty but by more than a thousand. Everyone acknowledges that a million dollars is not what it used to be, and the cost of $6,000 was very serious money—four years' income for an average Manhattan family, or more.

Melville had made a start on his third book, *Mardi,* before his marriage. After the move to New York he apparently took stock and admitted that he had been spending his profits in advance. Instead, he began systematically borrowing books whenever he could restrain himself from buying his own, but he indulged himself another way, taking more than a year and a half to write that book, the first in which he dared to be ambitious of literary greatness. The Melvilles' first child, Malcolm, was born early in 1849, shortly before *Mardi* (London: Richard Bentley; New York: Harper, 1849) was published and widely attacked—having already cost Melville his first English publisher, John Murray, who read it and rejected it. At this time, in April 1849, Melville paid Wiley about $40 for the plates of *Typee* so the Harpers could print from them, without having to pay for the plates themselves, and become Melville's sole United States publisher. Abandoning his hopes to turn at once to another ambitious book, Melville instead wrote a book designed to be popular, *Redburn* (London: Bentley; New York: Harper, 1849), and then immediately wrote another one, *White-Jacket* (again Bentley and the Harpers, 1850). Hurt by a new London ruling that held that Americans could not obtain copyright in Great Britain, Melville managed to sell *White-Jacket* in England only because he went there and charmed Bentley into taking a chance on it after several other publishers had rejected it outright. Melville's heart was set on a Wanderjahr, a footloose exploration of Italy, the Holy Land—the Grand Tour, justified, for a thirty-year-old husband and father, by the fact that

he would be gathering material for popular new books. Melville did not get enough from Bentley for *White-Jacket* for him to fulfill that desire. On the especially long voyage home, in January 1850, frustrated, ambivalent, aspiring, he began planning a book that would be popular as well as ambitious—a book about whaling.

Melville worked hard on it, probably writing at first without much reference to source books. After three months, he described it to the younger Richard Henry Dana as half done—not unrealistic, because the previous summer he had written *Redburn* in two months then had written *White-Jacket* in the next two months. Melville's first break from work seems to have been a hurried excursion to West Point. At some point (about this time?), he came upon the passages on Tupai Cupa in George Lillie Craik's *The New Zealanders* (London, 1830) and, as Geoffrey Sanborn discovered, promptly introduced Queequeg into the manuscript, endowing him with aspects of Tupai Cupa's appearance and history. Melville needed some basic books about whales as well as books about whaling, but one important book was not easy to get: Putnam had to order Thomas Beale's *Natural History of the Sperm Whale* (1839) from England. By the time it arrived, on July 10, 1850, Melville needed vigorous outdoor exercise, more than he may have gotten by that possible expedition to West Point.

His visit to Pittsfield, Massachusetts, began merely as a vacation at his late uncle's farm (technically, owned by the estate of Melville's late Boston grandfather), but he brought the whaling manuscript with him, and for at least a few days in the second half of August he worked on it there, in the old mansion. The widow and children (or technically the trustees of the estate) had sold the great old house, in need of repairs—moldering, but a mansion—and the land (250 acres) for $6,500; the purchasers, the Morewoods, would not take possession for several months. Melville had not known the farm was for sale. Once he found that he had just missed the chance to buy the farm (which one of his cousins in 1848 had called his "first love"), he seems to have been seized by an absolutely unreasonable jealousy. Then once he had made friends with Nathaniel Hawthorne, who for several months had been living outside nearby Lenox, Melville knew that if he were to do justice to his book he had to live in the Berkshires, starting immediately. Melville's behavior makes some sense if you calculate the power the Berkshires held in his memory from the times he had visited his uncle Thomas Melvill (as the name was spelled) and later from the summer of 1837, when he had worked the farm before teaching at a rural school in the nearby mountains. His behavior also makes emotional sense if you take account of his disillusion at the way his friends and associates among the New York literati were viciously sniping at each other, and particularly if you consider his exaltation at the possibility of finishing his book with Mount Greylock in view to the north and his new friend Nathaniel Hawthorne a few miles away to the south. If he remained in Manhattan, he could not make the book as good as it could be. Besides, he had been amazingly responsible several months before: he had cut short his stay in London just as he was meeting marvelous literary men and artists, and he had sacrificed the year-long Grand Tour that surely would have proved of such high economic benefit to his family, in the long run. Now the most important thing in his life was that he make the whole book as great as the part he had already written.

Melville was not being rational, but he was persuasive. His father-in-law, after already advancing him the $2,000 in 1847, advanced him $3,000 more toward the purchase of Dr. John Brewster's farm adjoining the old Melvill property. For a total of $6,500—exactly the price of the Melvill farm—he bought a much smaller farm (160 acres) and a decrepit old farmhouse—a house that had never been grand, as his uncle's had been and would be again. This might seem barely rational of Shaw. But for his money Shaw got the assurance that as long as he paid his annual September visit to hold court in Lenox he could see his daughter and her family in Pittsfield, and during the rest of the year she would be only a direct ride away on the new railroad that ran from Albany to Boston, right across Massachusetts.

In mid-September 1850 Melville probably turned over to Brewster the $3,000 that Shaw had just advanced him. He arranged at the same time that Brewster would hold a mortgage of $1,500 on the property. That leaves a discrepancy of $2,000. The best I can figure it, Brewster agreed, only to wait a while for the $2,000, say a month or two, until the indenture of lease on the highly desirable Fourth Avenue house could be sold at a tidy profit and Melville could pay Sophia Thurston what she had advanced for the house and turn over $2,000 more of the proceeds to Brewster. When Melville returned to New York after his vacation, Tertullus D. Stewart (a friend from Lansingburgh) offered to loan him whatever he needed to tide him over, but Melville refused: he would not need the loan. In October 1850 Melville and his wife along with his mother and three of his sisters moved to the farm, which he promptly named Arrowhead. Perhaps his brother Allan had already purchased his new house on thirty-first Street, for he and *his* wife and two children, one a new baby, along with one Melville sister, were preparing to move out of the Fourth Avenue house within a few weeks. By Christmas the Fourth Avenue house was empty but unsold. In January 1851 Allan talked about buying it himself, because he and his wife were unhappy being so far uptown (thirty-first Street was remote from everything, they had found), but that proved to be just talk. Meantime, Melville had not gotten settled in a writing room until well into November, and then he had to be dispossessed for the family Thanksgiving (including the aunt and cousins) to be held there because there was no room on the first floor big enough for the tables. His wife had taken the baby and fled the chaos to Boston, the only place you could celebrate Thanksgiving properly, and did not return until New Year's Day 1851. The older sister also fled, hurt as she left by Herman's irritation at having to drive her to the station during his writing hours, and his mother and two remaining sisters spent December in frustration, imprisoned: he would not trust them to drive Charlie, the horse, and he hated taking time off from writing to drive them where they wanted to go and wait to bring them back, or drive home and return for them. In January, he was so desperate for concentrated writing time that he suddenly let them test-drive Charlie and thereafter trusted them to go where they wanted.

The discomforts and inadequacies of the farmhouse became more apparent all the time, and by the end of February 1851 it was clear that the cooking facilities were too primitive for the cook (their class of people always had a cook or else were actively recruiting a replacement), the outdoor well was inconvenient, they needed an inside kitchen pump, the parlor walls were soiled, some of the upholstered furniture looked worse

after the move, certain rooms needed painting, and the barn in particular required painting. Melville hired men to start the renovations in the dead of winter, maybe before the first of March. The first order of business was grotesquely impractical, digging foundations in the still-frozen ground, and not just for a kitchen and a wood house but also for a narrow piazza on the cold north side of the house. This piazza, too small for a whole family to use, would be Herman's vantage point for viewing Greylock from the first floor, just below his small window for viewing it in his writing room before starting his day's task.

In March the lease on the house in town was sold at last, the buyer paying $7,000, of which $5,000 must have gone to Sophia Melville. That left $2,000 for Melville, minus any fees that he may have owed. In any case, as he admitted five years later, the sum received had fallen "short of the amount expected to have been realized." Instead of having $2,000 to turn over to Dr. Brewster, six months late, perhaps with no interest being charged on it, he had somewhat less than $2,000, and he had workmen to pay as well as Dr. Brewster. He would need more money, just to pay Dr. Brewster the remainder of the purchase money, not counting the $1,500 mortgage. In March Melville began thinking of taking Mr. Stewart up on his generous offer to help a friend in need, but as a last resort. First, on April 25, Melville wrote to Fletcher Harper asking for an advance on his whaling manuscript. A clerk at the Harpers brought Melville's account up to date on April 29, and on April 30 the Harpers sent their refusal, citing their "extensive and expensive addition" to their plant and pointing out that Melville was already in debt to them for "nearly seven hundred dollars." At once, on May 1, Melville borrowed $2,050 from Stewart, for five years, at 9 percent interest. Some of the money, maybe a good deal of it, went to make up the $2,000 Melville had to pay Dr. Brewster, some of it went for the workmen at Arrowhead. Some of it was earmarked to pay a compositor in New York City, for in his anger at the Harpers Melville decided to pay for the setting and plating of the book himself in the hope of selling the plates to another publisher for a better deal than the Harpers would give him. In early May, not later, as we had thought until recently, when a letter from Augusta to Allan was given to Arrowhead, Melville carried the bulk of the manuscript to town, and left it with Robert Craighead, the man who had stereotyped *Typee* for Wiley & Putnam. *Moby-Dick* had to be a great financial success, and there was some hope that it would be. Richard Bentley, Melville's British publisher, gave Melville a note for £150 (about $700, after Melville took a penalty for cashing the note early). Melville had the money to make the $90 annual mortgage payment to Dr. Brewster in September and to pay Stewart his semi-annual interest of $92.50 on November 1, 1851, more than a month after the three-volume *The Whale* was published in London, a week after the Melvilles' second child, Stanwix, was born, and two weeks before the publication of the Harper *Moby-Dick*. (The American title, a last minute substitution, reached London too late to be given to the book there.)

In mid-November Melville received copies of *Moby-Dick* from the Harpers and drove over to Lenox to give one to the man he had dedicated the book to. Through a long dark afternoon Melville and Hawthorne sat alone together in the Wilson Hotel (later the Curtis Hotel) envied by the locals who knew the two authors were there and by those who later learned,

among them the young head of the Lenox Academy, Matthew Henry Buckham, who wrote an account to the Windsor, Vermont *Journal*. It was, I decided, the happiest day of Melville's life. On November 16 someone handed Melville a letter from Hawthorne about the book on the road with his sisters to visit the Morewoods, the new owners of Melville's Uncle Thomas's place, where he had written a little of *Moby-Dick* and all of his essay on Hawthorne. In Ch. 89 of the new book Melville had decided that Mexico was a Loose-Fish except for the territories already seized or purchased, including California. He had foreseen (Ch. 14) the time when America would "add Mexico to Texas, and pile Cuba upon Canada" in its piratical acquisitiveness. Better than any other American writer of his generation, Melville knew geopolitics as a humble but reflective observer and as a pondering autodidact. This man who now saw the world in terms of "linked analogies" (*Moby-Dick*, Ch. 70) had known, as early as 1848, and believed passionately in 1850 and 1851 that literary greatness in America was there for the seizing as much as the Marquesas Islands and California had been just a few years earlier. As he sat at Broadhall with Hawthorne's letter of praise in his pocket, Melville had every reason to feel triumphant, for he knew that American literary greatness had been a Loose-Fish that he, in his whaling book, had made a Fast-Fish forever.

Some of the London reviews of *The Whale* were full of extravagant praise. On October 24, 1851, the London *Morning Advertiser* concluded that the three volumes reflected more credit on America and were "more honourable to American literature" than any other works it could name. On October 25 *John Bull* called this the most extraordinary of Melville's books: "Who would have looked for philosophy in whales, or for poetry in blubber? Yet few books which professedly deal in metaphysics, or claim the parentage of the muses, contain as much true philosophy and as much genuine poetry as the tale of the *Pequod*'s whaling expedition." The *Leader* on November 8 said that *The Whale* was "a strange, wild, weird book, full of poetry and full of interest." The *Morning Post* on November 14 said that "despite its occasional extravagancies, it is book of extraordinary merit, and one which will do great things for the literary reputation of the author." The *Weekly News and Chronicle* on November 29 echoed the *Leader:* it was "a wild, weird book, full of strange power and irresistible fascination for those who love to read of the wonders of the deep."

Normally, many British reviews of Melville's books had been reprinted in the United States. This time, for crucial weeks, the only reviews of the three-volume *The Whale* known in the United States were two hostile ones published in London on the same day, October 25, in the *Athenæum* and the *Spectator.* They were hostile largely because there was no epilogue in the English edition to explain just how Ishmael survived. Most likely, Bentley had told his compositors to shove all the Etymology and Extracts, all that distracting "E" junk, into the back of the third volume, and in the process of shifting things around the single sheet containing the Epilogue (half a page of type, scrunched, very likely from being on the bottom of the tall stack shipped across the Atlantic) had gotten lost. One of the rewards in carefully rereading the book is the chance to see just how early and how deftly Melville began preparing for Ishmael's survival, but without the epilogue any reviewer reading fast could be excused for assuming that Melville had violated the basic contract between writer and reader: if you create a

first person narrator, you make sure he or she lives to record the story somehow. The loss of the epilogue tainted the whole British reception, freeing hostile reviewers to write scathingly of Melville, and forcing friendly reviewers to find ways of praising the book despite such an obvious flaw. The fact that only the *Athenæum* and the *Spectator* reviews were reprinted in the United States anytime soon was worse than bad luck—it was disastrous for Melville.

On November 20, 1851, the reviewer in the Boston *Post* saved himself work by constructing his long review mainly from the *Athenæum,* which had declared that the style of Melville's tale was "in places disfigured by mad (rather than bad) English; and its catastrophe is hastily, weakly, and obscurely managed." As it happened, the *Athenæum* did not spell out just what was wrong with the "catastrophe" which it condemned. The reviewer in the *Post* confessed not to have read quite halfway through the book, and so had no notion of what the ending was like. Any Bostonian might have laid aside the *Post* knowing that the London paper had been contemptuous of *Moby-Dick* but having no idea why the reviewer thought the catastrophe was so bad. In case anyone in Boston (including any member of Melville's or his wife's family) had missed the review in the *Post,* the sister paper the *Statesman* reprinted it in full, long quotations from the *Athenæum* intact, two days later, on November 22. The *Spectator* review was reprinted in the New York *International Magazine* for December, and not reprinted again, as far as is known. The *Spectator* gave a clearer indication what was wrong with the ending of the London edition, saying that the *Pequod* "sinks with all on board into the depths of the illimitable ocean," narrator presumably included, but the complaint was muffled by the different charge that Melville continually violated another rule, "by beginning in the autobiographical form and changing ad libitum into the narrative"—something that any reader halfway into the book might have agreed with.

Long before he saw a set of *The Whale,* Melville saw at least what the *Post* reprinted from the *Athenæum,* but unless he saw the *International Magazine* he did not know for sure that the epilogue had been omitted from *The Whale*. He made no protest to Bentley, it is clear, and no American reviewer read the *International Magazine* and seized the chance to challenge the Londoners: "Aren't these Brits odd? They are saying Ishmael does not survive, but right here in my copy Ishmael is rescued by the *Rachel*." Later Melville saw a handful of some of the short quotations from a few reviews besides those in the *Athenæum* and the *Spectator,* including the ones in *John Bull* and the *Leader,* but he never, in all the rest of his life, ever had any idea that despite the loss of the epilogue many British reviewers had showered honor on him as a great prose stylist.

In the United States Melville's friend Evert Duyckinck reviewed the book promptly in two successive weeks in the New York *Literary World,* an influential, tone-setting paper. The first installment was devoted to belaboring the coincidence that the book was published just as news was arriving of the sinking of the *Ann Alexander* by a whale off Chile. In the second, November 22, Duyckinck complained about Melville's irreverence toward religion, the "piratical running down of creeds and opinions." He had warned Melville politely in his review of *White-Jacket* early in 1850

that he would not countenance irreverence. There was strong praise from some reviewers in the United States, but it did not last long, and it was submerged by the ferocious religious reviews, such as the one in the New York *Independent* on November 20: "The Judgment day will hold him [Melville] liable for not turning his talents to better account, when, too, both authors and publishers of injurious books will be conjointly answerable for the influence of those books upon the wide circle of immortal minds on which they have written their mark. The book-maker and the book-publisher had better do their work with a view to the trial it must undergo at the bar of God." The low church religious press would have leapt on Melville anyhow, but Duyckinck lent intellectual and literary respectability to such pious denunciations.

In the first two weeks after publication the Harpers sold 1,535 copies of *Moby-Dick,* but in the next two months or so they sold only 471 more, and after that sales dwindled rapidly. Meanwhile, Melville was writing a new book, a psychological novel based on what he had learned about his own mind in the last years and in which he played off Dutch Calvinist Christianity against Bostonian—and British—feel-good Unitarianism. Self-analysis had begun in earnest two and a half years earlier, after Melville had written *Redburn* as a fast, easy book because much of it was autobiographical. In late May 1849 his nineteen-year-old brother, Tom, was sailing out of Manhattan for China, the age Herman had sailed from Manhattan to Liverpool on his first voyage, in 1839, and going on board Tom's ship triggered memories of ten years earlier, when his brother Gansevoort (dead in London just after arranging the publication of *Typee)* had seen Melville off from those docks. In early June of 1849, as he wrote his story, he had done a reckless thing, to use his later words: he had dipped an angle into the well of childhood, gone fishing in his own memory, where who knew what monstrous creatures might be brought up. Melville had been psychologically naive still in planning a fast and easy expedition into his childhood. The intense psychological unfolding that began not in planning *Redburn* but in writing it and the aftermath of having written it, had allowed Melville to write *Moby-Dick* and *Pierre*—the first version of *Pierre*.

What happened to *Pierre* I have told in the HarperCollins Kraken Edition (1995), illustrated by Maurice Sendak, in Volume 2 of my *Herman Melville: A Biography, 1851–1891* (2002), and in *Melville Biography: An Inside Narrative* (2013). I need to recapitulate the story briefly here to include information first reported in 2013. Melville took the manuscript to New York about the first day of 1852, just as some extremely hostile religious reviews of *Moby-Dick* were appearing. The Harpers read the manuscript and offered him an impossible contract: not the usual fifty cents on the dollar after costs but twenty cents on the dollar after costs. During the negotiations for *Pierre* the unscrupulous Harpers knew they did not need Melville at all. Secretly and shrewdly, if not underhandedly, they had obtained Dickens's *Bleak House* for serialization in *Harper's New Monthly Magazine* and for book publication and were preparing a massive publicity campaign that in fact made them enormously rich. The Harper publicity campaign for Dickens became an all-out attack on international copyright in which, after a few months, the Harpers blandly exaggerated

Melville's financial rewards from his earlier books. Without international copyright, Melville's career was doomed, it became clear.[1]

In January 1852, already, it was clear that *Moby-Dick* was not going to be as popular as even *Redburn*. When consulted, Duyckinck was aghast at the plot, his 1852 review shows, and no help. Stung, Melville abruptly declared that Pierre had been a juvenile author—this so he could satirize the Duyckincks in the manuscript as champions of mediocrity. Reckless still, he added sections about Pierre's immaturely attempting a great book. In some of these pages he maligned Pierre's publishers. The Harpers honored their contract to publish *Pierre,* on such ruinous terms to the author, but by the next summer, after the ferocious reviews of *Pierre* began to appear, they quietly began letting literary people know that they thought Melville was crazy—"a little crazy," to be exact—not too crazy to keep people from buying *Redburn* and *White-Jacket*.

Pierre lost Melville his English publisher, Bentley, who figured if he continued to sell copies of the books he had in print he would eventually lose only £350 ($1,650) or thereabouts by publishing Melville, somewhat short of $50,000 in present purchasing power. Bentley would have printed *Pierre,* expurgated (as he had silently expurgated *The Whale,* without consulting Melville at all), if Melville had taken his generous offer to publish it without an advance and to divide any profits it made. During most of 1851 Melville had felt little guilt about his secretly borrowing $2,050 from Stewart: after all, the whaling book was so good that it had to succeed, and he could pay Stewart back before his wife and father-in-law found out about the loan. After January 1852, when he knew the Harper contract was disastrous, he may have hoped against hope for three or four months that all would work out, that Bentley would like *Pierre* and offer a handsome advance, or even that against all odds *Pierre* might sell so well in the United States that he would make money—even at twenty cents for every dollar the Harpers took in (after recouping their expenses) rather than fifty cents. Melville may have denied in January 1852 and denied again in April and May 1852 that his career was over, however long he might try to postpone the death gasps.

When *Pierre* was published in the summer of 1852 it was savaged as no significant American book had ever been savaged. "Herman Melville Crazy," read a headline I discovered decades ago. Reviewers already had called Melville crazy for writing *Moby-Dick,* and accusations that he was insane recurred, still more strongly, in the reviews of *Pierre,* confirming in the minds of his Bostonian mother-in-law and his wife's brother and two half-brothers the possibility that Melville was insane as well as a failure. That fall Melville tried to interest Hawthorne in writing a story he had heard in Nantucket that summer, on an outing with his loyal father-in-law, about a woman on the coast of Massachusetts who had nursed a shipwrecked sailor and married him, only to have him desert her. Starting mid-December 1852 Melville wrote the story himself, finishing it on or around May 22, 1853, the day his first daughter, Elizabeth, was born.

1. For horrific new details see Parker, *Melville Biography: An Inside Narrative*," Ch. 16, "Melville without International Copyright (1850–1854): A Harper 'Sacrifice' for the 'Public Good.'" As long as American publishers could publish the best British novelists very cheaply, without paying the authors, why would anyone in this country or England pay an American novelist very much for a book?

The fate of *Moby-Dick* and *Pierre,* and his new labors on the book about the abandoned woman, *The Isle of the Cross,* had taken their toll on his health. As a sailor, Melville had been an athlete, and late in 1849, on the voyage to England, could still climb "up to the mast-head, by way of gymnastics." In the summer of 1851 he fearlessly climbed high in a tree on an expedition to Greylock. That vigor waned, fast. In a memorandum made after his death Melville's widow recalled: "We all felt anxious about the strain on his health in Spring of 1853"—perhaps as early as April, when his mother was so concerned that she wrote her brother Peter Gansevoort hoping he could persuade his political friends to gain Herman a foreign consulship from the new president, Hawthorne's college friend Franklin Pierce: "The constant in-door confinement with little intermission to which Hermans occupation as author compels him, does not agree with him. This constant working of the brain, & excitement of the imagination, is wearing Herman out." The year before, on May 1, 1852, Melville had defaulted on the semi-annual interest payment of $92.50 that he owed his friend Stewart, and he had defaulted on it again that November. His mother's letter was written a week before he defaulted for the third time on his interest payments to Stewart. Elizabeth Shaw Melville may have recalled this period in early spring as the time when the family was most concerned about Melville, but the worst came at the end of spring, in June, when he carried *The Isle of the Cross* to New York City only to have the Harpers refuse to publish it, just at the time when it was quite clear that he had no hope of gaining a foreign consulship.

Melville was thoroughly whipped, but bravely he started writing short stories within weeks or even days of returning home with the manuscript of *The Isle of the Cross*, which he retained for some months, at least, and possibly some years, before presumably destroying it. When a single letter of his has sold for much more than $100,000, the value of that manuscript, if it emerged today, might rival that of an exceedingly expensive painting. But in September 1853, with the manuscript in his possession still, Melville defaulted on the payment of $90 due to Dr. Brewster. The money went for preparations for the wedding of his sister Kate to John C. Hoadley. Several weeks later, he defaulted, as he did every six months now, on the interest he owed Stewart. This was his guilty secret—not something the family knew of.

Melville wrote to the Harpers late in November 1853 that he had "in hand, and pretty well towards completion," a book, "partly of nautical adventure"; then he qualified himself: "or rather, chiefly, of Tortoise Hunting Adventure." At that time he promised it for "some time in the coming January," and asked for and received the advance—a dollar for each of the three hundred estimated pages. He had specified that he was expecting "the old basis—half profits"—not the punitive terms he had accepted for *Pierre*. Now he paid Dr. Brewster the $90 he should have paid in September. This slight relief was followed by catastrophe. On December 10, 1853, much of the Harper stock of printed books and sheets was destroyed by fire, and the brothers charged Melville all over again for their costs before giving him royalties on his books—in effect, hanging on to the next $1,000 or so he earned. That is, to emphasize the unconscionable nature of their behavior, the Harpers recouped their losses in the fire by charging their expenses against him not once but twice. Once the Harpers' Dickens

triumph in 1852 had made *Harper's New Monthly Magazine* an enterprise that coined money, once the Harpers through their tool, the new *New York Times*, had won the publicity war against international copyright in the spring of 1852, they could treat Melville any way they liked.

If in mid-December Melville thought that after their disaster the Harpers could not possibly publish any book right away, then he could have written them and asked in so many words if they would be able to publish the book they had just given him the advance for. If they had replied that they could not be back in business for six months, he could not have returned their advance because he had already spent much or most of it, but he could have asked their permission to try to place the tortoise manuscript elsewhere and to turn over to them $300 if he got that sum from another source or, more reasonably, turn over to them $300 worth of articles for their magazines. Instead, he decided to get more money from another publisher for the tortoise story, or for *part* of the tortoise material—or at least for material also dealing with tortoises. The batch of pages Melville sent to George Putnam on February 6, 1854, seems to be what was published in the March *Putnam's* as the first four sketches of *The Encantadas,* the second of which was "Two Sides to a Tortoise."

In mid-February 1854 Melville endured a "horrid week" of pain in his eyes (words Allan Melville quoted back to their sister Augusta on March 1). Melville had been crowding Augusta with pages to copy for him, overworking her and overworking himself. He was suffering from public shame brought on him by *Pierre,* private shame at having been late with a payment to Brewster, and shame at his continually defaulting on the interest he owed Stewart, compounded by shame at doing something with the tortoise material that looks less than straightforward, no matter that the Harpers had themselves behaved abominably. No wonder he was sick.

In the next two years Melville wrote a full-length book, *Israel Potter;* several stories; and "Benito Cereno," which proved long enough to be serialized in three installments at the end of 1855. Early that year, with "Benito Cereno" far along, if not quite finished, he collapsed. In her memoir his widow recorded: "In Feb 1855 he had his first attack of severe rheumatism in his back—so that he was helpless." How long he was helpless is not clear. The timing of the attack suggests the possibility of couvade, because his wife gave birth to her fourth child, Frances, on March 2, 1855. This pregnancy had proceeded in pace with the monthly installments of *Israel Potter,* the last of which appeared in March, before book publication. Melville knew that his sister Kate Hoadley was also pregnant (she bore her daughter on May 30, 1855). In "Tartarus of Maids" Melville made the narrator say: "But what made the thing I saw so specially terrible to me was the metallic necessity, the unbudging fatality which governed it." The unbudging fatality of the gestation process was a reminder to him, during each of the last two of his wife's pregnancies, of the passing of months, including the Mays and Novembers in which he missed interest payments to Stewart and the September in which he had missed a payment to Brewster. (He missed the September 1855 payment, too.) The day of reckoning was approaching remorselessly—May 1, 1856—and Melville was progressively less able even to hope to avert the disaster. Malcolm's life had begun in triumph; Stanwix's life had begun in distress—with Lizzie's horribly painful breast infection and the doctor-enforced

early weaning of the baby, while Melville was reading reviews of *Moby-Dick* and writing *Pierre.* Melville's daughters' lives began when his state was even more miserable. After Bessie's birth Melville had failed to get *The Isle of the Cross* into print and had failed to obtain a consulship; before Frances's birth he had become helpless from rheumatism.

According to his widow, Melville's first attack of severe rheumatism in February 1855 was followed in June by an attack of sciatica, which lasted through August, according to some comments made in September 1855. Nevertheless, later that year Melville began a satire on American optimism, *The Confidence-Man,* and continued to work on it during the early months of 1856; during all this time, apparently, Tertullus D. Stewart was threatening to seize the farm—the same property already mortgaged to Dr. Brewster. Melville wrote his plight into the manuscript in the story of China Aster, who was ruined by accepting a friendly loan. In April 1856, just before the entire loan of $2,050 and back interest (and probably interest on the interest) became due, after living with the literally crippling secret of his debt since the first of May 1851, Melville had to confess his folly to his father-in-law and throw himself on Shaw's mercy. For once, luck favored Melville, and he managed to sell off half the farm swiftly. Yet the sale was not simple (as Lion G. Miles recently discovered): the buyer paid for the property in three annual installments, nothing up front in 1856. Shaw must have advanced the money himself to pay off Stewart then recouped it out of the buyer's 1857 and 1858 payments. Loving and magnanimous still, Shaw recognized how ill Herman was and advanced him still more money for a trip abroad in hopes of restoring his health. Before he sailed, Melville had completed *The Confidence-Man,* which on its publication in 1857 earned him not a penny, so he was out for the paper and ink in which he wrote it, and the paper and ink with which his sister Augusta copied it, and Augusta had copied it for nothing. At least she could see it in print, unlike *The Isle of the Cross,* which she had also copied.

After his return from his journey to the Holy Land and Europe in 1856–57, the next word of Melville's health is in 1858, as his widow recalled: "A severe attack of what he called crick in the back laid him up at his mothers in Gansevoort in March 1858—and he never regained his former vigor & strength." The next year on November 21, 1859, his neighbor Sarah Morewood, mistress of his uncle's grand old house, wrote to a friend: "Herman Melville is not well—do not call him moody, he is ill." (The back pain recurred: Melville's mother at Christmas 1867 described Herman as then finally able to go out: "his trouble was a 'Kink in his back.'" In 1882 he suffered again what his wife described as "one of the attacks of 'crick in the back'").

In the late 1850s Melville may not have put enough food on the table. At least one year, his father-in-law sent money for winter provisions. Melville earned a little money from lecturing for three seasons, late 1857 to early 1860. In early 1860 he completed a book he called *Poems.* At least two publishers rejected it and it was never published, though some of the poems that he published in *Timoleon* (1891) may have been in the 1860 collection. In 1861 Judge Shaw died and Elizabeth Melville inherited enough money to support herself, her four children, and her husband for a few years. Melville's old debt to the Harpers was finally erased by gradual sales, in 1865, and he published a poorly received book of Civil War

poems, *Battle-Pieces,* in the summer of 1866. The Harpers did not pay Melville for the war poems they printed in *Harper's Monthly* and the book made him no money. Melville did not have regular earnings until late in 1866, when he took a $4-a-day job as a custom officer in New York City, a job he held nineteen years. We know now that there was a terrible marital crisis in early 1867. Elizabeth's brothers encouraged her to believe Melville was insane and with her minister, Henry Bellows, explored the possibility that she might leave him. Her strength of character emerged in verses she wrote to commemorate her prayerful decision to stay with her husband. That fall the Melvilles' oldest child, Malcolm, shot himself to death at age eighteen. Melville's life contracted even more tightly after 1869, when he began secretly working on a new poem that grew to 18,000 lines. He paid to have *Clarel* printed in 1876, using money his uncle Peter Gansevoort had left for that purpose; it was contemptuously reviewed, and in 1879 the publisher made him authorize the destruction of the remaining bound copies and sheets, which were cluttering up the office.

In the decades after its publication *Moby-Dick* was seldom mentioned in print. Melville's loyal friend Henry T. Tuckerman praised it in 1863 as having "the rare fault of redundant power," redundant in the Miltonic sense of overflowing. Twice in the 1870s the controller of the custom house, Chester A. Arthur, later president, who had recognized Melville's name on a list of employees, kept him from being fired; in the interim before becoming vice president and president he quoted *Moby-Dick* knowingly to interviewers. In 1884, the English sea-novelist W. Clark Russell said the sailors' talk in the forecastle scene in *Moby-Dick* "might truly be thought to have come down to us from some giant mind of the Shakespearean era." The family heard about this article and in March 1885 Melville's cousin, Catherine Gansevoort Lansing, with Elizabeth Melville in tow, sallied out to Brentano's on Union Square to order the September 1884 *Contemporary Review,* the one containing Russell's article. Thereafter, some in the family began to understand that Herman Melville had been an important writer. Even before Melville's death in September 1891, and abundantly thereafter, Elizabeth Melville knew that her husband was being recognized as one of the greatest American writers, and she proudly guarded his reputation as best she could. In this endeavor she was assisted by her older daughter, Bessie, who was born on or about the day *The Isle of the Cross* was completed. Mrs. Melville died in 1906, Bessie in 1908—late enough to have met with a would-be biographer, Frank Jewett Mather, whose plans fell through because Houghton Mifflin would not advance him $500 for the project. In the centennial of Melville's birth and in the next few years, first in England and then in the United States, Melville was at last saluted as belonging with Shakespeare and other great writers of the world.

None of this extraordinary fame impressed Melville's surviving daughter, Frances. Until her death in 1938 she blamed him for her sister Bessie's arthritis (caused by insufficient food, she thought), blamed him for her brother Malcolm's suicide in 1867, blamed him for innumerable acts, such as rousting her and her older sister out of bed at least one night early in 1876 to help him proofread *Clarel,* blamed him for her brother Stanwix's wasted life and early death (in 1886). She alone remembered that her father's in-laws (always excepting Judge Shaw) had believed every newspaper and

magazine assertion that Melville was insane; she alone remembered that for some time in the 1860s her mother may also have thought him insane, on the basis of his behavior, presumably, as well as on the full authority of many unimpeachable writers in the press; and she alone knew that her Bostonian uncle and half-uncles had tried to devise a way her mother could separate from her father without creating a scandal. Frances Melville Thomas told her oldest daughter that she did not know "H.M." in the new light of world fame: her resentments were so strong that his new reputation was a disparagement of her own memories and her own feelings. Two of her daughters were old enough to remember Melville well and to have known Mrs. Melville intimately, as young women, so they were able to correct Frances's views by their own memories, but the two younger daughters, born near the time of Melville's death, remembered Mrs. Melville less clearly and were more dependent on Frances for information about their grandfather. At least one of them absorbed Frances's lesson that the price of genius was too high for any family to pay. Now, in the twenty-first century, even the Melville great-grandchildren are all dead, but the numerous great-great-grandchildren (themselves no longer young) feel entitled to whatever simple or complex pleasures they can find in being descended from Herman Melville. For them, the high price of genius has at last been paid, perhaps in full.

Belated Praise and the Melville Revival: 1879–1927

GATH [GEORGE ALFRED TOWNSEND]

[A Future President Explicates *Moby-Dick*]†

I asked General Chester A. Arthur, late Collector of the Port of New York, whom the Republicans would have to support for Governor [of New York]. He said there were plenty of good men and a fair field this year. Speaking of some who had lately behaved very well, Mr. Arthur said:

"The shark is only an angel well governed." Not being quite understood, he added:

"Did you ever hear of Herman Melville, one of our novelists? He wrote 'Typee.' When I went into the Custom house first, as an associate officer, I saw a list of men doomed to be decapitated. Among them was the name 'Herman Melville.' It struck me as singular, and I inquired whether he was any relation of the author. They told me he was the same man. I had read 'Typee' and 'Omoo' and 'Moby Dick' with a good deal of interest, and I said: 'It is certainly a shame to turn out a man like that from a mere clerkship.' I had him saved. Then when I became Collector of the Port I kept him in my eye and protection again, though I never spoke to him. It was Melville, in his novel of 'Moby Dick,' who depicted a sermon by a negro who told of an escape from a shark, and, after describing the shark in

† *The Cincinnati Enquirer* (July 4, 1879). The prominent journalist George Alfred Townsend (1841–1914), known as the youngest Civil War correspondent, took his pseudonym from adding "h" to his initials in tribute to 2 Samuel 1.20 ("Tell it not in Gath"). He knew several presidents personally before or during their term of office. This account was reprinted in the San Francisco *Bulletin* on July 17, 1879, with a better title, "A Novelist in the Custom House." In another article in the *Enquirer* (September 23, 1881) reprinted as far away as Helena, Montana (October 7, 1881), after Arthur had become president (on September 19), Townsend wrote:

> Everything about General Arthur is now of interest, and I will relate the little I have personally seen of him. About 1874 I was introduced to him in the Custom-house, when he was collector. I was at once charmed with his address, and a certain sweet gentility of countenance. He has a great faculty for making every body at home whom he wishes to. He said to me that he had taken pleasure on several occasions in giving custom house positions to literary men who had not accumulated anything; and he mentioned the author of "Typee," Herman Melville, whose novels General Arthur said he had had much delight in, and he was glad to keep him in a comfortable clerkship. From that time onward I saw him occasionally, and once or twice spent half an hour to an hour with him.
>
> Several articles, not always complimentary, appeared about the numerous literary men in the custom house. Perhaps the Melvilles never saw any of Gath's comments about Arthur's admiration for his books, and from the way the family suffered from threats of Herman's being fired they never felt that his job was "comfortable" or knew that a superior officer was protecting him. Arthur apparently did not tell Gath of any personal connection, but he may have known about Melville and his family when he attended Lansingburgh Academy.

horrible language as a monster of iniquity and vice, he ended by saying: 'But, my breddred, we mustn't tink we is much better dan de shark. De angels is only sharks well governed."

Herman Melville is said to be still in the Custom-house, aged sixty years. * * * After such a life of adventure and of literary prominence, it is strange to see Melville doomed by politicians to lose his clerkship, and only saved by the youthful remembrance of General Arthur.

ANONYMOUS

[A Marvellous Odyssey]†

It was not until this remarkable romance came out, over forty years ago, that Herman Melville, that strange compound of Dutch, English and Huguenot blood, merited the name of the American prose Victor Hugo. In fact it was after the publication of "Moby-Dick" that Hugo's really great romances of the sea and land came out; so that one might truthfully turn the tables and almost say that Victor Hugo was the French Melville. So striking, so suspicious is the resemblance between "Moby-Dick" and "Les Travailleurs de la Mer," that one is sorely tempted to the enticing accusation of a certain sort of plagiarism on the part of the Sage of Guernsey, of that general and diffusive kind which critics love to point out between Swift and Lucian, Goethe and Marlowe, Faust and Manfred, and Coleridge and Mme. de Staël. A gigantic devil-fish is one of the *dramatis personæ* of "Moby-Dick" as it is of "The Toilers of the Sea," and the fantastic learning, the episodic style, the wonderful picturings of the sea in all its beauty and terror, and the peculiar manipulation of imaginative effects in both books, emphasize the fact of their essential kinship. Hugo was familiar enough with English literature to command it completely, and it is far from incredible that he knew the works of Melville. Hawthorne paid the warmest tribute to Melville's surpassing imagination, and to him "Moby-Dick" was very appropriately dedicated.

Indeed there is no romance of Hawthorne's that surpasses this whaling-story in witching power, in grasp on the pulse, in almost supernatural strength of description, and in ability to quicken the blood. The undreamt poesy lying in the lives of Natucket whalers in the fifties has for once received epical treatment, and the result is a marvellous Odyssey of adventure in warm seas and in icy, in halcyon and in purgatorial latitudes, over such a range of sunlit or storm-smitten billows as could occur only in actual experience before the mast in search of real whales on the real deep. Hugo never travelled; and therefore his lovely poems of the sea or his "Hans d'Islande" are conceived from the shore—powerful but shadowy idealizations of things he had never really seen. His empty shells Melville fills full of the living breath, the roar, the music, the vibration of the living sea, Whitmanesque in its intensity and realism, the memories of one who had lived years in the troughs or on the mountain-crests of Homeric waves,

† The New York *Critic*, n.s. 19 (April 15, 1893): 232. No one has identified the author of this remarkable tribute occasioned by the publication of the United States Book Company edition of *Moby-Dick*, authorized by Melville's widow.

and who therefore in his work simply transcribed ineffaceable impressions. Mohammedanism has been described as mere "paint"; even so Hugo's seas are painted seas as compared with the streaming or starlit or surging oceans of this real mariner. To depict the guillotining of Louis XVI, it is not necessary indeed to feel the actual flash of the axe itself across one's arteries, but a certain amount of actual knowledge is always welcome if not indispensable in depicting the mighty phenomena of great voyages, great emotions or great deeds. This Hugo did not possess, and his phantom romances are mere husks, mere *larvæ* or *simulacra*, illumined by an unnatural interior light, like a jack o'lantern, as compared with the healthy, wholesome, rude but terrible realities of such books as "Moby-Dick."

In this story Melville is as fantastically poetical as Coleridge in the "Ancient Mariner," and yet, while we swim spellbound over the golden rhythms of Coleridge feeling at every stroke their beautiful improbability, everything in "Moby-Dick" might have happened. The woe-struck captain, his eerie monomania, the half-devils of the crew, the relentless pursuit of the ever-elusive vindictive white whale, the storms and calms that succeed each other like the ups and downs of a mighty hexameter, all the weird scenery of the pursuit in moonlight and in daylight, all are so wonderfully fresh in their treatment that they supersede all doubt and impress one as absolutely true to the life. Even the recondite information about whales and sea-fisheries sprinkled plentifully over the pages does not interfere seriously with the intended effect; they are the paraphernalia of the journey. The author's extraordinary vocabulary, its wonderful coinages and vivid turnings and twistings of worn-out words, are comparable only to Chapman's translations of Homer. The language fairly shrieks under the intensity of his treatment, and the reader is under an excitement which is hardly controllable. The only wonder is that Melville is so little known and so poorly appreciated.

ARCHIBALD MacMECHAN

The Best Sea Story Ever Written†

Anyone who undertakes to reverse some judgment in history or criticism, or to set the public right regarding some neglected man or work, becomes

† The Kingston, Ontario *Queen's Quarterly* 7 (October 1899): 120–30. Still a youngish man although already Munro Professor of English at Dalhousie University, MacMechan (1862–1933) wrote Melville on November 21, 1889, a letter remarkable for its extraordinary praise of *Moby-Dick*: "I have read and re-read 'Moby-Dick' with increasing pleasure on every perusal: and with this study, the conviction has grown up that the unique merits of that book have never received due recognition." It was also remarkable for MacMechan's offer to dedicate himself to doing Melville justice:

> I find myself in a position which enables me to give myself to literature as a life-work. I am anxious to set the merits of your books before the public and to that end, I beg the honour of correspondence with you. * * * In the matter of style, apart from the matter altogether, I consider, your books, especially the earlier ones, the most thoroughly New World product in all American literature.

Melville replied politely, but cautiously, explaining that he had entered his eighth decade and had "latterly come into possession of unobstructed leisure," but only just as his vigor had begun noticeably to decline. What little vigor was left, Melville explained, he husbanded "for certain matters as yet incomplete, and which indeed may never be completed," among them, he did not specify, the *Billy Budd* manuscript, which was not quite completed at his death in 1891.

at once an object of suspicion. Nine times out of ten he is called a literary snob for his pains, or a prig who presumes to teach his betters, or a "phrase-monger," or a "young Osric," or something equally soul-subduing. Besides, the burden of proof lies heavy upon him. He preaches to a sleeping congregation. The good public has returned its verdict upon the case, and is slow to review the evidence in favour of the accused, or, having done so, to confess itself in the wrong. Still, difficult as the work of rehabilitation always is, there are cheering instances of its complete success; notably, the rescue of the Elizabethan dramatists by Lamb and Hazlitt and Leigh Hunt. Nor in such a matter is the will always free. As Heine says, ideas take possession of us and force us into the arena, there to fight for them. There is also the possibility of triumph to steel the raw recruit against all dangers. Though the world at large may not care, the judicious few may be glad of new light, and may feel satisfaction in seeing even tardy justice meted out to real merit. In my poor opinion much less than justice has been done to an American writer, whose achievement is so considerable that it is hard to account for the neglect into which he has fallen.

This writer is Herman Melville, who died in New York in the autumn of 1891, aged eighty-three [really, 72]. That his death excited little attention is in consonance with the popular apathy towards him and his work. The civil war marks a dividing line in his literary production as well as in his life. His best work belongs to the *ante-bellum* days, and is cut off in taste and sympathy from the distinctive literary fashions of the present time. To find how complete neglect is, one has only to put question to the most cultivated and patriotic Americans north or south, east or west, even professed specialists in the nativist literature, and it will be long before the Melville enthusiast meets either sympathy or understanding. The present writer made his first acquaintance with *Moby-Dick* in the dim, dusty Mechanics' Institute Library (opened once a week by the old doctor) of an obscure Canadian village, nearly twenty years ago; and since that time he has seen only one copy of the book exposed for sale, and met only one person (and that not an American) who had read it. Though Kingsley[1] has a good word for Melville, the only place where real appreciation of him is to be found of recent years is in one of Mr. Clark Russell's dedications.[2] There occurs the phrase which gives this paper its title. Whoever takes the trouble to read this unique and original book will concede that Mr. Russell knows whereof he affirms.

Melville is a man of one book, and this fact accounts possibly for much of his unpopularity. The marked inferiority of his work after the war, as well as changes in literary fashion, would drag the rest down with it. Nor are his earliest works, embodying personal experience like *Redburn* and

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It had been assumed that by this belated publication of an article in a small Canadian periodical MacMechan had meant well but had not profoundly affected the course of the Melville Revival. Frederick J. Kennedy and Joyce Deveau Kennedy in "Archibald MacMechan and the Melville Revival," *Leviathan* 1 (October 1999): 5–37, show that MacMechan carried out the pledge he offered to Melville: he devoted his life to awakening appreciation of *Moby-Dick* in Canada, in the United States, and in England, tirelessly proselytizing friends at Johns Hopkins and Harvard and other universities, and getting his "The Best Sea Story Ever Written" reprinted and reprinted in ways that brought it to an ever-expanding audience. The Kennedy and Kennedy article is a superb piece of research into literary history and a much-deserved tribute to the accomplishments of a well-meaning and well-doing admirer of Melville.

1. The English author Charles Kingsley (1819–1875) alludes to the ambiguous primitivism of *Typee* in his 1857 *Two Yers Ago*.
2. For Russell, see "Damned by Dollars" and "Melville's British Admiers" in this Norton Critical Edition.

White Jacket, quite worthy of the pen which wrote *Moby Dick*. *Omoo* and *Typee* are little more than sketches, legitimately idealized, of his own adventures in the Marquesas. They are notable works in that they are the first to reveal to civilized people the charm of life in the islands of the Pacific, the charm which is so potent in *Vailima Letters* and *The Beach of Falesà*. Again, the boundless archipelagos of Oceanica furnish the scenes of *Mardi*, his curious political satire. This contains a prophecy of the war, and a fine example of obsolete oratory in the speech of the great chief Alanno from Hio-Hio. The prologue in a whale-ship and the voyage in an open boat are, perhaps, the most interesting parts. None of his books are without distinct and peculiar excellences, but nearly all have some fatal fault. Melville's seems a case of arrested literary development. The power and promise of power in his best work are almost unbounded; but he either did not care to follow them up or he had worked out all his rifts of ore. The last years of his life he spent as a recluse.

His life fitted him to write his one book. The representative of a good old Scottish name, his portrait shows distinctively Scottish traits. The head is the sort that goes naturally with a tall, powerful figure. The forehead is broad and square; the hair is abundant; the full beard masks the mouth and chin; the general aspect is of great but disciplined strength. The eyes are level and determined; they have speculation in them. Nor does his work belie his blood. It shows the natural bent of the Scot towards metaphysics; and this thoughtfulness is one pervading quality of Melville's books. In the second place, his family had been so long established in the country (his grandfather was a member of the "Boston tea-party") that he secured the benefits of education and inherited culture: and this enlightenment was indispensable in enabling him to perceive the literary "values" of the strange men, strange scenes and strange events amongst which he was thrown. And then, he had the love of adventure which drove him forth to gather his material at the ends of the earth. He made two voyages; first as a green hand of eighteen [*sic*] in one of the old clipper packets to Liverpool and back; and next, as a young man of twenty-three [*sic*], in a whaler. The latter was sufficiently adventurous. Wearying of sea-life, he deserted on one of the Marquesas Islands, and came near being killed and eaten by cannibal natives who kept him prisoner for four months. At last he escaped, and worked his way home on a U.S. man-o'-war. This adventure lasted four years and he went no more to sea.

After his marriage, he lived at Pittsfield for thirteen years, in close intimacy with Hawthorne, to whom he dedicated his chief work. My copy shows that it was written as early as 1851, but the title page is dated exactly twenty years later. It shows as its three chief elements this Scottish thoughtfulness, the love of literature and the love of adventure.

When Mr. Clark Russell singles out *Moby Dick* for such high praise as he bestows upon it, we think at once of other sea-stories,—his own, Marryat's, Smollett's perhaps, and such books as Dana's *Two Years before the Mast*. But the last is a plain record of fact; in Smollett's tales, sea-life is only part of one great round of adventure; in Mr. Russell's mercantile marine, there is generally the romantic interest of the way of a man with a maid; and in Marryat's the rise of a naval officer through various ranks plus a love-story or plenty of fun, fighting and prize-money. From all these advantages Melville not only cuts himself off, but seems to heap all sorts of obstacles in his self appointed path. Great are the prejudices to be

overcome; but he triumphs over all. Whalers are commonly regarded as a sort of sea-scavengers. He convinces you that their business is poetic; and that they are finest fellows afloat. He dispenses with a love-story altogether; there is hardly a flutter of a petticoat from chapter first to last. The book is not a record of fact; but of fact idealized, which supplies the frame for a terrible duel to the death between a mad whaling-captain and a miraculous white sperm whale. It is not a love-story but a story of undying hate.

In no other tale is one so completely detached from the land, even from the very suggestion of land. Though Nantucket and New Bedford must be mentioned, only their nautical aspects are touched on; they are but the steps of the saddle-block from which the mariner vaults upon the back of his sea-horse. The strange ship "Pequod" is the theatre of all the strange adventures. For ever off soundings, she shows but as a central speck in a wide circle of blue or stormy sea; and yet a speck crammed full of human passions, the world itself in little. Comparison brings out only more strongly the unique character of the book. Whaling is the most peculiar business done by man upon the deep waters. A war-ship is but a mobile fort or battery; a merchantman is but a floating shop or warehouse: fishing is devoid of any but the ordinary perils of navigation; but sperm-whaling, according to Melville, is the most exciting and dangerous kind of big game hunting. One part of the author's triumph consists in having made the complicated operations of this strange pursuit perfectly familiar to the reader; and that not in any dull, pedantic fashion, but touched with the imagination, the humor, the fancy, the reflection of a poet. His intimate knowledge of his subject and his intense interest in it make the whaler's life in all its details not only comprehensible but fascinating.

A bare outline of the story, though it cannot suggest its peculiar charm, may arouse a desire to know more about it. The book takes its name from a monstrous, invincible, sperm whale of diabolical strength and malice. In an encounter with this leviathan, Ahab, the captain of a Nantucket whaler, has had his leg torn off. The long illness which ensues drives him mad; and his one thought upon recovery is vengeance upon the creature that has mutilated him. He gets command of the "Pequod," concealing his purpose with the cunning of insanity until the fitting moment comes: then he swears the whole crew into his fatal vendetta. From this point on, the mad captain bears down all opposition, imposes his own iron will upon the ship's company, and affects them with like heat, until they are as one keen weapon fitted to his hand and to his purpose. In spite of all difficulties, in spite of all signs and portents and warnings, human and divine, he drives on to certain destruction. Everything conduces to one end, a three days' battle with the monster, which staves and sinks the ship, like the ill-fated "Essex."

For a tale of such length, *Moby Dick* is undoubtedly well constructed. Possibly the "Town-Ho's Story," interesting as it is, somewhat checks the progress of the plot; but by the time the reader reaches this point, he is infected with the leisurely, trade-wind, whaling atmosphere, and has no desire to proceed faster than at the "Pequod's" own cruising rate. Possibly the book might be shortened by excision, but when one looks over the chapters it is hard to decide which to sacrifice. The interest begins with the quaint words of the opening sentence: "Call me Ishmael"; and never slackens for at least a hundred pages. Ishmael's reasons for going to sea,

his sudden friendship with Queequeg, the Fijian harpooneer, Father Maple's sermon on Jonah, in the seamen's bethel, Queequeg's rescue of the country bumpkin on the way to Nantucket, Queequeg's Ramadan, the description of the ship "Pequod" and her two owners, Elijah's warning, getting under way and dropping the pilot, make up an introduction of great variety and picturesqueness. The second part deals with all the particulars of the various operations in whaling from manning the mastheads and lowering the boats to trying out the blubber and cleaning up the ship, when all the oil is barreled. In this part Ahab, who has been invisible in the retirement of his cabin, comes on deck and in various scenes different sides of his vehement, iron-willed, yet pathetic nature, are made intelligible. Here also is much learning to be found, and here, if anywhere, the story dawdles. The last part deals with the fatal three days' chase, the death of Ahab, and the escape of the White Whale.

One striking peculiarity of the book is its Americanism—a word which needs definition. The theme and style are peculiar to this country. Nowhere but in America could such a theme have been treated in such a style. Whaling is peculiarly an American industry; and of all whale-men, the Nantucketers were the keenest, the most daring, and the most successful. Now, though there are still whalers to be found in the New Bedford slips, and interesting as it is to clamber about them and hear the unconscious confirmation of all Melville's details from the lips of some old harpooneer or boat-header, the industry is almost extinct. The discovery of petroleum did for it. Perhaps Melville went to sea for no other purpose than to construct the monument of whaling in this unique book. Not in his subject alone, but in his style is Melville distinctly American. It is large in idea, expansive; it has an Elizabethan force and freshness and swing, and is, perhaps, more rich in figures than any style but Emerson's. It has the picturesqueness of the new world, and, above all, a free-flowing humour, which is the distinct *cachet* of American literature. No one would contend that it is a perfect style; some mannerisms become tedious, like the constant moral turn, and the curiously coined adverbs placed before the verb. Occasionally there is more than a hint of bombast, as indeed might be expected; but, upon the whole, it is an extraordinary style, rich, clear, vivid, original. It shows reading and is full of thought and allusion; but its chief charm is its freedom from all scholastic rules and conventions. Melville is a Walt Whitman of prose.

Like Browning he has a dialect of his own. The poet of *The Ring and the Book* translates the different emotions and thoughts and possible words of pope, jurist, murderer, victim, into one level uniform Browningese; reduces them to a common denominator, in a way of speaking, and Melville gives us not the actual words of American whalemen, but what they would say under the imagined conditions, translated into one consistent, though various Melvillesque manner of speech. The life he deals with belongs already to the legendary past, and he has us completely at his mercy. He is completely successful in creating his "atmosphere." Granted the conditions, the men and their words, emotions and actions, are all consistent. One powerful scene takes place on the quarter-deck of the "Pequod" one evening, when, all hands mustered aft, the Captain Ahab tells of the White Whale, and offers a doubloon to the first man who "raises" him:

> "'Captain Ahab,' said Tashtego, 'that White Whale must be the same that some call Moby Dick.'
>
> * * *
>
> If man will strike, strike through the mask!'"
>
> (ch. 36)

Then follows the wild ceremony of drinking round the capstan-head from the harpoon-sockets to confirm Ahab's curse. "Death to Moby Dick. God hunt us all, if we do not hunt Moby Dick to the death!" The intermezzo of the various sailors on the forecastle which follows until the squall strikes the ship is one of the most suggestive passages in all the literature of the sea. Under the influence of Ahab's can, the men are dancing on the forecastle. The old Manx sailor says:

> "I wonder whether those jolly lads bethink them of what they are dancing over. I'll dance over your grave, I will—that's the bitterest threat of your night-women, that beat head-winds round corners. O, Christ! to think of the green navies and the green-skulled crews."

Where every page, almost every paragraph, has its quaint or telling phrase, or thought, or suggested picture, it is hard to make a selection; and even the choicest morsels give you no idea of the richness of the feast. Melville's humour has been mentioned; it is a constant quality. Perhaps the statement of his determination after the adventure of the first lowering is as good an example as any:

> "Here, then, from three impartial witnesses, I had a deliberate statement of the case.
>
> * * *
>
> 'Queequeg,' said I, 'come along and you shall be my lawyer, executor and legatee.'"
>
> (ch. 49)

The humour has the usual tinge of Northern melancholy, and sometimes a touch of Rabelais. The exhortations of Stubb to his boat's crew, on different occasions, or such chapters as "Queen Mab," "The Cassock," "Leg and Arm," "Stubb's Supper," are good examples of his peculiar style.

But, after all, his chief excellence is bringing to the landsman the very salt of the sea breeze, while to one who has long known the ocean, he is as one praising to the lover the chiefest beauties of the Beloved. The magic of the ship and the mystery of the sea are put into words that form pictures for the dullest eyes. The chapter, "The Spirit Spout," contains these two aquarelles of the moonlit sea and the speeding ship side by side:

> "It was while gliding through these latter waters that one serene and moonlight night, when all the waves rolled by like scrolls of silver; and by their soft, suffusing seethings all things made what seemed a silvery silence, not a solitude; on such a silent night a silvery jet was seen far in advance of the white bubbles at the bow. Lit up by the moon it looked celestial; seemed some plumed and glittering god uprising from the sea.
>
> * * *

> Walking the deck, with quick, side-lunging strides, Ahab commanded the t'gallant sails and royals to be set, and every stunsail spread. The best man in the ship must take the helm. Then, with every mast-head manned, the piled-up craft rolled down before the wind. The strange, upheaving, lifting tendency of the taffrail breeze filling the hollows of so many sails made the buoyant, hovering deck to feel like air beneath the feet."

In the chapter called "The Needle," ship and sea and sky are blended in one unforgettable whole:

> "Next morning the not-yet-subsided sea rolled in long, slow billows of mighty bulk, and striving in the "Pequod's" gurgling track, pushed her on like giants' palms outspread. The strong, unstaggering breeze abounded so, that sky and air seemed vast outbellying sails; the whole world boomed before the wind. Muffled in the full morning light, the invisible sun was only known by the spread intensity of his place; where his bayonet rays moved on in stacks. Emblazonings, as of crowned Babylonian kings and queens, reigned over everything. The sea was a crucible of molten gold, that bubblingly leaps with light and heat."

It would be hard to find five consecutive sentences anywhere containing such pictures and such vivid, pregnant, bold imagery: but this book is made up of such things.

The hero of the book is, after all, not Captain Ahab, but his triumphant antagonist, the mystic white monster of the sea, and it is only fitting that he should come for a moment at least into the saga. A complete scientific memoir of the Sperm Whale as known to man might be quarried from this book, for Melville has described the creature from his birth to his death, and even burial in the oil casks and the ocean. He has described him living, dead and anatomized. At least one such description is in place here. The appearance of the whale on the second day of the fatal chase is by "breaching," and nothing can be clearer than Melville's account of it:

> "The triumphant halloo of thirty buckskin lungs was heard
>
> * * *
>
> to the dim mistiness of an advancing shower in a vale."
>
> (ch. 134)

This book is at once the epic and the encyclopaedia of whaling. It is a monument to the honour of an extinct race of daring seamen; but it is a monument overgrown with the lichen of neglect. Those who will care to scrape away the moss may be few, but they will have their reward. To the class of gentleman-adventurer, to those who love both books and free life under the wide and open sky, it must always appeal. Melville takes rank with Borrow, and Jefferies, and Thoreau, and Sir Richard Burton; and his place in this brotherhood of notables is not the lowest. Those who feel the salt in their blood that draws them time and again out of the city to the wharves and the ships, almost without their knowledge or their will; those who feel the irresistible lure of the spring, away from the cramped and noisy town, up the long road to the peaceful companionship of the awaking earth and the untained sky; all those—and they are many—will find in Melville's great book an ever fresh and constant charm.

WILLIAM LIVINGSTON ALDEN

[Let Us Have a Melville Society]†

Now that George Borrow[1] has been rediscovered, and there is a prospect that we shall have a Borrowian cult, will not somebody make an effort to revive the books of Herman Melville? They have been forgotten except by the few, just as were "Lavengro" and "The Romany Rye," but their day will surely come. Let us hasten it. Why should we not have a Melville society? We have Ibsen societies, and there is more true poetry in Melville's books than there is in all of Ibsen's plays. Besides the poetry, Melville's books are full of genuine realism, and not genuine power. We may grant all their defects, their occasional melodrama and pathos, and rank rubbish, which Mr. Melville sometimes shot into them, but for all that Herman Melville is far and away the most original genius that America has produced, and it is a National reproach that he should be so completely neglected.

Of course I know that many of the readers of *The Times Saturday Review* will not agree with me, but have they read Melville? Do they know the opening chapters of "Mardi"—I won't say a word in behalf of the rest of the book? Have they read "Moby Dick," that masterpiece of sea lore and sea poetry? Have they seen Jackson fall from the yard in "Redburn," and have they lounged with White Jacket in the frigate's maintop? Melville needs to be studied with care, just as does Walt Whitman. The reader must recognize the chaff and the wheat and refrain from making the mistake of assuming that because Whitman and Meville wrote pages of unmitigated rubbish they did not also write pages of which their country should be forever proud. By all means let us have a Melville society, which will devote organized effort to the task of securing for Melville the recognition which he deserves.

† "London Literary Letter," *The New York Times* (August 5, 1899). George Monteiro first discovered this document by Alden (1837–1908), a London correspondent for the *New York Times*, and published it (along with letters from others) in "'Far and Away the Most Original Genius That America Has Produced': Notations on the New York *Times* and Melville's Literary Reputation at the Turn of the Century," *Resources for American Literary Study* 5 (spring 1975): 69–80. As Monteiro explained,

> An unwritten chapter in accounts of Herman Melville's literary reputation lies in the interest taken in his work by reviewers, columnists, and readers in the book supplement of the New York *Times* at the turn of the century. Notices of impending English editions, the publication of Frank T. Bullen's sea books, and the personal enthusiasm for Melville shown by the *Times*'s literary correspondent in London, all combined in the period from 1899 to 1905 to keep Melville's name before potential American readers.

Oddly enough, the history of the Melville Revival, often dated to articles published in the centennial of his birth, 1919, or to the publication of Raymond Weaver's *Herman Melville: Mariner and Mystic* (1921), has not yet been written as one coherent and detailed story drawing together information from both American and British (which means worldwide) sources. See the notes to the essay by MacMechan (p. 635 herein) and to the Morley and Tomlinson selection (p. 644 herein), as well as Parker's "Melville's British Admirers: 'Passing on the Torch'" (p. 646, in this volume).

1. Borrow (1803–1881), famous for *The Bible in Spain* (1843) as well as the books named, was often compared to Melville.

LOUIS BECKE

[The Strangest, Wildest, and Saddest Story][†]

Many years ago, when the present writer was supercargo of a small trading schooner, sailing from the beautiful port of Apia, in the Samoan group—those lovely clustering gems of the blue Pacific, whose names are now familiar and endeared to all English-speaking people through the memory of the man[1] who rests on the verdured slopes of Vailima Mountain,—there came on board our ship, one day, a sweet, dainty little English lady, whom we rough wandering island traders loved, and feared as well; for with all the gentleness that filled her woman's heart, she could, as we knew at times by our burning cheeks of shame, be very, but justly, bitter to us when we had done those things which we ought not to have done. And in Samoa, in those days, men did those things which they ought not to have done very frequently.

"I have brought you some books," she said to our grizzled old captain; "and among them are three volumes by an American writer—Herman Melville. It is called "The Whale,' and it is the strangest, wildest, and saddest story I have ever read." * * *

The captain of our little schooner was the one well-educated man of our ship's company—a man with a very heavy hand and a very kindly Scotsman's heart. The mate and myself were not always in perfect accord with him, and often bitter words had passed between us; but "Moby Dick" brought us happily together again. For "the old man" had a deep, resonant voice, and he read the story to us from beginning to end. And although he would stop now and again, and enter into metaphysical matters, we forgave him, for we knew that he too, like us, was fascinated with the mad Captain Ahab and the brave mate Starbuck and the rest of the ill-fated crew of the "Pequod."

"A WAYFARER"

[A Deposition from a New Reader][‡]

It is clear that the wind of the spirit, when it once begins to blow through the English literary mind, possesses a surprising power of penetration. A

† From the "Introduction" to *Moby-Dick* (London: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1901), pp. ix–xii. This evocative account, long known only in a single sentence quoted in a list of notable publications by Richard Bentley, prefaced the 1901 reissue of 270 copies of the 1893 United States Book Company edition imported to England in 1900. In the 1960s Richard Colles Johnson obtained a copy of the introduction for Parker from what was then the only known surviving copy, in the British Library. For the recent report of a second copy, presented to a friend by James M. Barrie, see "Melville's British Admirers: 'Passing on the Torch'" (p. 658 herein). Someone may yet date the event more closely, but it seems to have been around 1872 that Becke (born 1855 in New South Wales) heard *The Whale* read aloud in the South Seas—from volumes that might now be auctioned for well over a hundred thousand dollars.

1. Robert Louis Stevenson (1850–1894), Scottish author of *Kidnapped* (1886) and other immensely popular works, who went to the Pacific in 1888 hoping his tuberculosis would progress more slowly there. He took *Typee* and *Omoo* with him, as all literate British and American travelers who visited that ocean did.

‡ London *Nation* (January 22, 1921): 572. The Wayfarer, identified in *Doubloon* as John Middleton Murry, is more likely (as Kevin J. Hayes says in his 1994 *The Critical Response to Herman Melville's "Moby-Dick"*) the editor of the *Nation*, H. W. Massingham, whose familiarity with *Moby-Dick* is attested in the Morley and Tomlinson piece that follows.

few weeks ago it was pleased to aim a simultaneous blast in the direction of a book known to some generations of men as "Moby Dick." A member of the staff of THE NATION was thereupon moved in the ancient Hebrew fashion to buy and to read it. He then expressed himself on the subject, incoherently indeed, but with signs of emotion as intense and as pleasingly uncouth as Man Friday betrayed at the sight of his long-lost father. While struggling with his article, and wondering what the deuce it could mean, I received a letter from a famous literary man, marked on the outside "Urgent," and on the inner scroll of the MS. itself "A Rhapsody." It was about "Moby Dick." Having observed a third article on the same subject, of an equally febrile kind, I began to read "Moby Dick" myself. Having done so I hereby declare, being of sane intellect, that since letters began there never was such a book, and that the mind of man is not constructed so as to produce such another; that I put its author with Rabelais, Swift, Shakespeare, and other minor and disputable worthies; and that I advise any adventurer of the soul to go at once into the morose and prolonged retreat necessary for its deglutition. And having said this, I decline to say another word on the subject now and for evermore.

CHRISTOPHER MORLEY AND H. M. TOMLINSON

[*Moby-Dick:* "The Immense Book of the Sea"]†

One we have mentioned several times before, who knows what he is talking about, writes to us from London. We hope he won't mind our quoting a portion of his letter, which was not intended for print:

> I've been reading again a writer I've never heard an American mention. Not once. I cannot recall that I've ever seen him referred to in a book on American letters. (You'll be surprised, perhaps alarmed, to hear that Concord, Mass., is a place of such august memories to me that perhaps it is best I should never visit it.)[1] But this writer—an

† From Christopher Morley, "The Bowling Green" (column), New York *Evening Post* (February 5, 1921). Reprinted by permission of John C. Woodruff, Executor of the Christopher Morley Literary Estate, and by Peters Fraser & Dunlop on behalf of the Estate of Henry Major Tomlinson. Henry Major Tomlinson (1873–1958), English novelist and journalist, as literary editor of the London *Nation* 1917–23 and afterward in the 1920s did as much as any Englishman to popularize Melville. Morley (1890–1957), American novelist, dramatist, editor, and journalist, helped keep Americans abreast of the burgeoning British praise of Melville. In the New York *Saturday Review of Literature* 2 (May 1, 1926): 755, he printed this passage of a letter from a London correspondent: "Melville, it is supposed, has been re-discovered recently. Actually, folk here rave hysterically about 'Moby Dick,' principally, and apparently lack the wit to know that 'Pierre' is one of the most important books in the world, profound beyond description in its metaphysic."

Morley's insistence that Melville had "long been accepted as a classic" is not justified by the way Melville had been treated in literary histories and textbooks, but it suggests that Morley had learned from his journalist elders something of the separate flurries of attention paid to *Moby-Dick* in the two decades before the centennial of his birth, 1919, and that as a working journalist Morley may well have been aware of "a little Melville racket" here and there that Melville scholars have not yet discovered. Melville's reputation was on the point of a revival for decades before 1919–21, by which time it was an unmistakable fact; see pp. 636 and 655–56 for the Kennedys' new discoveries.

1. For decades British admirers of American writers had made pilgrimages to Concord, the lifelong home of Thoreau, the longtime home of Emerson, and the home for extended periods of Hawthorne and Bronson Alcott (and his young daughter Louisa May Alcott). For decades, also, the Boston firm of Ticknor and Fields and its successors up through Houghton Mifflin had controlled American textbooks so as to canonize Boston-area men and to exclude anyone else, such as the New Yorkers Walt Whitman and Herman Melville.

American all right—puts it across *all* the sea writers I know. For that sort of work your side of the water not only holds the belt, but is going to keep the championship. The title *cannot* be contested. You have held the championship since 1851. Conrad, Masefield, Marryat[2]—not on your life! They're not in it. I regret to have to say it, but there it is. This very sea book (which I have not named to you) was, in my presence this week, admitted by Arnold Bennett, Augustine Birrell, Massingham, John Middleton Murry, and Swinnerton,[3] to be the—well, to be IT. There ain't nothing like it. There never will be again. What book is that? My stars, I'd belt some of you Americans over your really tremendous classic when you bring forward the English sea writers.

The way America has taken to Conrad, considers Masefield a classic, and has even bought up an edition of *Old Junk*, and another of *The Sea and the Jungle*,[4] makes writers on this side very grateful. But MOBY DICK . . . ah, the secret is out! That's the Immense book of the sea.

H. M. Tomlinson

But it does seem a little odd to us that Mr. Tomlinson has never seen *Moby Dick* mentioned in American journalism. Melville, like Dana, has so long been accepted as a classic over here that he is more or less taken

2. Popular British sea writers, named out of chronological order. Polish-born Joseph Conrad (1857–1924), author of *Lord Jim* (1900). John Masefield (1878–1967), author of *Salt-Water Ballads* (1902), who read Melville very early, in, of all places, Yonkers, New York. Frederick Marryat (1792–1848), author of *Peter Simple* (1834), a book the young Melville knew. Masefield, who became poet laureate in 1930, persistently praised *Moby-Dick* early in the 20th century, before the Melville Revival, as in *The Mainsail Haul* (1905). Conrad protested too vehemently about not being influenced by *Moby-Dick* and Melville's other books; see his January 15, 1907, letter printed in "*Moby-Dick" as Doubloon* (pp. 122–23) on *The Whale* ("a rather strained rhapsody with whaling for a subject and not a single sincere line in the 3 vols of it").
3. A clutch of famous and successful British writers, with ties to the Bloomsbury group and the *Nation*. Arnold Bennett (1867–1931), author of *The Old Wives' Tale* (1908), in the 1928 *The Savour of Life: Essays in Gusto* showed himself a rare admirer of Melville's *Pierre*. Augustine Birrell (1850–1933) wrote "The Great White Whale: A Rhapsody," London *Athenæum* no. 4735 (January 28, 1921): 99–100, as a notice of the new Oxford World's Classics edition with an introduction by Viola Meynell. Birrell's piece, reprinted in *Doubloon* (pp. 137–40) as one of the great stories about encountering Melville, includes this passage in which he explains that he was over thirty when he first heard Melville's name:

> I owed my introduction to "Omoo," "Typee" and "The Whale" to that exquisite judge of a good book, Sir Alfred Lyall, who was shocked at my ignorance, and most emphatically urged me to read "Omoo" and "Typee"; but, as ill luck would have it, he did not specially dwell upon "The Whale." To hear was, in those days, to obey, and a second-hand bookseller almost at once supplied me with these three books. Even then I was not out of the Wood of Ignorance, for though I was greatly taken with "Omoo" and "Typee" I was not so bewitched by them as to begin at once upon the three volumes of "The Whale"—which I allowed to remain for a whole decade unread. One happy day I took them down, and then and then only did Moby Dick swim into my ken. Oh, woeful waste! Is there, I wonder (looking all round me), another such book lying neglected in this very room? And yet now, when full of my wrongs, I have discovered that all this time I had intimate friends, and even relatives, not much addicted to holding their peace, who knew all about Ahab and Bildad and Peleg and Moby Dick, and yet never gave me a hint of their existence. What on earth were they talking about all these years! I cannot remember!

   Henry William Massingham (1860–1924) was editor of the *Nation* 1907–23. John Middleton Murry (1889–1957), editor of the *Athenæum* 1919–21, is remembered as the husband of Katherine Mansfield and the friend of D. H. Lawrence (and lover of Frieda Lawrence), as well as an early publisher of Virginia Woolf and T. S. Eliot. Turbulent and erratic, he promoted Melville's reputation in occasional passionate outbursts rather than sustained appreciations. Frank Swinnerton (1884–1982) was a critic, novelist, and editor at Chatto and Windus; in the New York *Bookman* in May 1921, he threw a dash of cool water on the London enthusiasm for *Moby-Dick* (see "It Is Not Everybody's Book" in *Doubloon,* pp. 140–41).
4. Tomlinson is alluding to two of his own books: *Old Junk* (1918) and *The Sea and the Jungle* (1912), an account of his voyage up the Amazon.

as a matter of course (as a matter of college course too often, we fear) and too little mentioned. Yet we have never seen a year go by without a little Melville racket cropping up somewhere. In 1919, the year of his centennial, there was a big Melville hullabaloo over here. *Moby Dick* has lately been reissued in England (by the Oxford University Press, in its admirable *World's Classic* [sic] series) which has brought it to the eye of English reviewers. (It went into the blessed company of *Everyman's Library* in 1907.) We must confess, for our own part, that we never read it until 1919, when the Melville centennial came along. But all that Mr. Tomlinson says is true. No man of sense needs to read sixty pages of *Moby Dick* to know it is one of the world's great books. Its fertile mysticism, its extraordinary humor and melancholy ("All noble things are touched with that"), betray an author "with a globular brain and a ponderous heart."

The only reason we can give for Mr. Tomlinson's not having seen Melville praised in American print—and we would like to give it as politely and deferentially as possible—is, quite simply, that, like most English journalists, he probably does not read the American prints nearly as thoroughly as we do the British. Now, let us be honest. When we get back to the office we will send him an accurate list of the British journals which are subscribed to by the *Evening Post*. Will he, in turn, tell us how many American papers and magazines are taken in the office (his own) of the London *Nation*? We have always been amazed at the complete agnosticism of many British editors as to what is going on over here in a literary way. The favorite preoccupation of most intelligent American editors is more mutualism among the English-speaking peoples. In reply to which we are greeted by that recent novennial quaintness from Mr. Punch. Mr. Tomlinson, for whom we have such affectionate regard, will not misunderstand our gentle plea. We speak for the good of the house.

HERSHEL PARKER

Melville's British Admirers: "Passing on the Torch"†

In 1988 I amassed a nine-inch-high stack of biographical information about the admirers, mainly British, who first made Herman Melville a cult figure then gradually celebrated him as one of the world's titanic writers. Thanks to Professor George Worth's extended loan of microfilm of the James Hannay papers, I was able to trace a continuous line from London around 1850 on through the Leicester admirers in the 1880s and the burgeoning of tributes after Melville's death and on into the twentieth century. Here I write about notably high-minded literary men (and a few women), lovers of Melville's language and compulsive quoters of phrases and sentences, among whom were idealistic sexual reformers who drew encouragement from Melville. Some of the admirers I write about were

† Adapted from "Melville as a Titan of Literature among High-Minded British Admirers: The Kory-Kory and Queequeg Component," in *Melville Biography: An Inside Narrative* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 2013), pp. 459–480. Copyright © 2012 by Hershel Parker. Reprinted by permission of Northwestern University Press. Archibald MacMechan, a Canadian, figures as a hero of this piece, and someone may identify and celebrate yet unidentified or insufficiently acknowledged American enthusiasts for *Moby-Dick* in the 1880–1920 period.

cranks and eccentrics, but I see them as momentous literary people, distinguished by a profound and loving knowledge of world literature and an excited determination to show that Melville deserved a high rank in it.

In London after the mid-1850s Melville's achievement in *The Whale* seemed to be forgotten. Perhaps people who read the book in 1851 cherished it and brought it to the attention of their friends during the next decade (perhaps some of the remarkable artists, literary men, and travelers who dined with Melville so jovially in 1849 did so), but indications that any such continuity existed are still scant, such as the recollection of J. St. Loe Strachey (May 6, 1922, in the *Spectator*) that in 1893, during the "boom" following Melville's death, a "lady of letters" expressed her delight that people were reading Melville again, and added: "I can't tell you how enthusiastic we all were, young and old, at the end of the 'forties and beginning of the 'fifties, over *Typee, Omoo,* and *Moby-Dick*. There was quite a furore over Melville in those days. All the young people worshipped him" (pp. 559–60). That remained tantalizingly unverified until 2015 when Scott Norsworthy used the Internet to show that the "lady of letters" was Mary Charlotte Mair ("Minnie") Senior Simpson, a novelist and Strachey's mother-in-law (*Melvilliana*, December 28, 2015).

For the decade and a half following 1853 there was (as far as we know up till now) near-total silence about *The Whale* in the London periodicals, yet a change in British attitudes toward American literature was in progress. There had been previous changes since 1820, when Sydney Smith posed his scornful rhetorical question, "In the four quarters of the globe, who reads an American book?" The height of the new midcentury respect for American literature is well represented by the concluding compliment the London *Morning Advertiser* paid to *The Whale* on October 24, 1851: three volumes "more honourable to American literature, albeit issued in London, have not yet reflected credit on the country of Washington Irving, Fenimore Cooper, Dana, Sigourney, Bryant, Longfellow, and Prescott." In the next phase, beginning around the midcentury and overlapping with the previous phase, some British critics concluded that Irving and Cooper were not validly American in spirit but were imitation English writers (precisely the conclusion Melville had come to about Irving, at least, in his essay on Hawthorne). This phase is well represented by the way the *Leader* on November 8, 1851, cleared the field before commencing to talk about *The Whale:*

> Want of originality has long been the just and standing reproach to American literature; the best of its writers were but second-hand Englishmen. Of late some have given evidence of originality; not *absolute* originality, but such genuine outcoming of the American intellect as can be safely called national. Edgar Poe, Nathaniel Hawthorne, Herman Melville are assuredly no British offshoots; nor is Emerson—the *German* American that he is!

George H. Lewes may have written these words, or possibly the author was the young Scottish sailor James Hannay, then just crashing into London life as a bohemian and professional critic and novelist. Hannay wrote for the *Leader* (July 3, 1852) a review of James Russell Lowell's *Poems* in which he paid tribute to the "breath of genius" that swept through all of Melville's books, and the same distinction between generations of

American writers as promulgated in the *Leader* informs Hannay's brief preface (dated November 1852) to his 1853 edition of Poe's poems. There Hannay spoke kindly of Irving and Cooper as essentially British, both founding their work "on our own classical models" (p. xi). Now, however, the British public was getting "acquainted with writers amongst the Americans who are really national" (p. xii)—Emerson, Lowell, Hawthorne, Poe—and Melville, whom he extolled for *The Whale,* "such a fresh, daring book—wild, and yet true,—with its quaint, spiritual portraits looking ancient and also fresh,—Puritanism, I may say, *kept fresh* in the salt water over there and looking out living upon us once more!" (p. xii). Even though the less discriminating attitude of the *Morning Advertiser* continued to be dominant, a new opinion was forming. While the effects of *The Whale* were still reverberating in London, a few readers (mainly young people) were pondering their way toward a further stage in their sense of what was of value in American literature.

They were in the minority. George Eliot (less radical and less well read on the subject than her companion Lewes), in the January 1856 *Westminster Review* (p. 290) praised *Hiawatha* and *The Scarlet Letter* as the "two most indigenous and masterly productions in American literature." (To her credit, in the same article she praised *Walden* for "plenty of sturdy sense" mingled with "unworldliness.") By the 1860s the British reading public and the British literary establishment were seeing Henry Wadsworth Longfellow as a poet almost if not quite the equal of Alfred Tennyson and (especially after his death in 1864), seeing Nathaniel Hawthorne as equal to or superior to most living British novelists. In *American Literature: An Historical Sketch 1620–1880* (1882) John Nichol, a professor of English literature at the University of Glasgow, praised *The Scarlet Letter* as the most important romance written in the English language during the century. To most English readers Hawthorne felt, as Irving had felt, unthreatening, indeed, downright *English.* It took time for an antiestablishment evaluation of American writers to crystallize. It took the publication of *Walden* in 1854 and *Leaves of Grass* in 1855, then more years, for only a few copies of these books reached England in the mid-fifties (among them the one that reached George Eliot). *Walden* was first published in England in 1884 and first actually printed there in 1886, while part of *Leaves of Grass* was first printed there, without "Song of Myself" and otherwise sanitized, in W. M. Rossetti's *Poems of Walt Whitman* of 1868. It took time for young radical writers to have the evidence with which to conduct their shakedown of the American canon, but by the 1860s and 1870s a remarkable number of the brightest, most vigorous British lovers of literature and art, men (the available evidence is almost exclusively about men) who shared idealistic and iconoclastic social views as well as aesthetic values, were deciding that great literature had come from one or another of three American writers (or perhaps two of them or all three) who at the time were practically unknown in Great Britain and were marginal figures in their own country: Melville, Whitman, Thoreau.

Although it is clear that a quarter century or so after the publication of *The Whale* a number of British artists and writers saw Melville in a new way, how the change occurred has not been documented in any detail. What follows here is a suggestive and impressionist survey of some connections among Melville's admirers and the admirers of Whitman and

Thoreau. More evidence for how Melville's reputation grew in Great Britain during this period may be found by searching out published comments on Melville that I did not locate and discovering new documentary evidence in archives. Anyone, anywhere, may now challenge, verify, and correct this account by using modern tools, starting, I assume, with newspaper and magazine databases, Google Books, and Google searches. A young scholar (or indeed an inquirer of any age) would extend my work here in correlating that information with study of who attended the same public schools and the universities together, who lived near each other (or shared quarters with each other), who belonged to the same clubs, who wrote for the same newspapers and magazines, who shared a publisher, who were bound by mutual acquaintances, by family connections, and by personal affection for each other. That is, anyone anywhere in the world might greatly expand and indefinitely complicate and enrich what is offered here.

Subject to challenge and correction, this much can be ventured still, early in the twenty-first century: In the third quarter of the nineteenth century the younger members of the British literary world who constituted the admirers of Melville, Whitman, and Thoreau belonged for the most part to three or four overlapping groups. They were members of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood of artist-writers or their associates, they were adherents of the working-men's movement (which is datable from 1854, when F. D. Maurice, the Christian Socialist, founded the Working Men's College in London), they were (a little later) Fabian Socialists, or they were themselves sea-writers or writers about remote countries. To belong in any of the first three of these groups was to be politically and socially radical, never far from the revolutionary spirit of Shelley (or from the aging but still formidable physical shapes of men and women who had seen "Shelley plain" (in Robert Browning's phrase), including Thomas Love Peacock (1785–1866) and Edward John Trelawny (1792–1881). To belong to the last group almost always meant to have done one's own fieldwork in comparative anthropology and to have learned (often under Southern constellations) to think untraditionally and independently and therefore to look at European society unconventionally.

One link between these writers and the *Leader* of the early 1850s was certainly young James Hannay, who made an almost instant transition from sailor to London journalist connected with Lewes's paper, which was especially influential (as Francis Espinasse recalled in his *Literary Recollections and Sketches*, 1893) "among the younger and more thoughtful members of the 'advanced' party in politics and religion"—and in literature (p. 293). From unpublished entries in Hannay's diaries we learn that in late 1852 he began a conscientious reading or rereading of Melville, who was already "a favourite writer" of his. While he was reading Melville he was also seeing the Rossetti family, although he moved in a faster, "bohemian" set and drank a great deal more alcohol (W. M. Rossetti remembered) than most members of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood did. Between reading *White-Jacket* and *Mardi* he spent Sunday evening, December 5, 1852, at Dante Gabriel Rossetti's, slept over, and breakfasted the next morning with "Gabriel" (the name the family used). The evidence stops there: Hannay does not record that he discussed Melville with D. G. or his brother W. M. (who earlier in the year read a little Tacitus with Hannay and spent the night at his place). Hannay was still intimate

with the Rossettis in the 1860s when W. M. Rossetti was preparing his selection from *Leaves of Grass.* (In the preface Rossetti recalled that one of the few reviews that did not sneer at the 1855 *Leaves of Grass* had appeared in the *Leader,* and in his *Recollections* he made it clear that he assumed the reviewer was Lewes.) On Christmas Day of 1870 D. G. Rossetti put *Pierre* on his list of "high-class" book orders, saying, with offhand authority, that he believed it was "not easily met with like others of his [Melville's], as it has not been republished in England" (*The Melville Log,* p. 716). He knew a great deal about Melville.

The Hannay-Rossetti connection is suggestive but not quite conclusive, and other links are also tenuous. (From this point I cite fewer sources because anyone on an Internet browser can find them speedily—and be led to further connections.) We know that in 1855 the painter William Bell Scott, master of a school of design in Newcastle on Tyne, sent a copy of the first American edition of *Leaves of Grass* to W. M. Rossetti, who was powerfully drawn toward the American and toward others, including Algernon Swinburne, who shared his sense of the importance of the American poet. (Swinburne lived with D. G. Rossetti for a time in the mid-1860s at Cheyne Walk.) W. M. Rossetti was affected by the literary-social working-men's movement centered in the Working Men's College, at which D. G. Rossetti was a part-time staff member. The poet James Thomson ("B. V." the "B." for Bysshe, in tribute to Shelley), who displayed his knowledge of *Mardi* in 1865 in the scruffily radical *National Reformer* edited by his friend the freethinker Charles Bradlaugh, became a friend of W. M. Rossetti's in 1871 and in a second article on Whitman in Bradlaugh's journal in 1874 became the first, as far as we know, to compare Melville and Whitman in print in England, describing Melville as the only living American writer who approached Whitman "in his sympathy with all ordinary life and vulgar occupations, in his feeling of brotherhood for all rough workers." This claim (reprinted in the posthumous 1892 *Poems, Essays and Fragments,* 86) could have been made from a reading of Melville's early books or even from the Bentley edition of *The Whale,* although it omitted from Chapter 26 "The great God absolute! The centre and circumference of all democracy! His omnipresence, our divine equality!" and tamed "thou great democratic God!" to "thou great God!" Had Thomson brought a copy of *Moby-Dick* home from his trip to America in 1873?

Early in 1881 Thomson went to Leicester for the opening of a new Secularist hall and formed a friendship with J. W. Barrs, who lived nearby. During his visits that year he introduced some of Melville's works to Barrs and (directly or through Barrs) to James Billson, a young solicitor who for years regularly taught classes in Latin and Greek at the Working Men's College there. In class Billson gave rein to "his strong and racy sense of humour" as he taught artisans "enough Greek to enjoy Aristophanes" (*The Leicestershire Archæological Society—The 78th Annual Report,* pp. xx–xxi). Two years after Thomson's death in 1882 from dipsomania, young Billson, spurred by the enthusiasm he now shared with Barrs and other friends, wrote Melville an admiring letter (August 21, 1884) in which he made clear that in his provincial experience (unlike D. G. Rossetti's) Melville's books were scarce, and "in great request." Billson added: "as soon as one is discovered (for that is what it really is with us) it is eagerly read & passed round a rapidly increasing knot of 'Melville readers.'" Barrs, who

in 1886 sent gifts of Thomson's books to Melville, introduced Thomson's friend the blind poet Philip Bourke Marston to *Mardi* in the 1880s. (Thomson seems not to have done so himself, although he is the link between Barrs and Marston, and his last alcoholic collapse was in Marston's room in D. G. Rossetti's house on Cheyne Walk.) Marston subsequently obtained all of Melville's books that were "accessible to him" presumably to have read aloud to him. Marston knew the Pre-Raphaelites Madox Brown and the short-lived Oliver Madox Brown as well as Swinburne; he was especially intimate with W. M. Rossetti (who in 1874 married Lucy Brown, Madox Brown's daughter) and with D. G. Rossetti. In the 1870s the Rossettis and Swinburne knew John Payne, who in *Vigil and Vision* (1903) published the sonnet "Herman Melville" in which he praised the five earlier books but valued *The Whale* with its "terrors and the splendours of the sea" over Melville's "idylls of the life afloat."

In the early 1880s the English sea-writer W. Clark Russell tried to revive Melville's reputation, apparently unaware of fellow admirers. In the London *Contemporary Review* (September 1884) he claimed first rank for Melville among "the poets of the deep":

> Whoever has read the writings of Melville must I think feel disposed to consider "Moby Dick" as his finest work. It is indeed all about the sea, whilst "Typee" and "Omoo," are chiefly famous for their lovely descriptions of the South Sea Islands, and of the wild and curious inhabitants of those coral strands; but though the action of the story is altogether on shipboard, the narrative is not in the least degree nautical in the sense that Cooper's and Marryat's novels are. . . . "Moby Dick" is not a sea-story—one could not read it as such—it is a medley of noble impassioned thoughts born of the deep, pervaded by a grotesque human interest, owing to the contrast it suggests between the rough realities of the cabin and the forecastle, and the phantasms of men conversing in rich poetry, and strangely moving and acting in that dim weather-worn Nantucket whaler.

The speeches in "Midnight—Forecastle" (Chapter. 40—which William Allen Butler in a review in the *Washington National Intelligencer* had found so disgusting) "might truly be thought to have come down to us from some giant mind of the Shakespearean era." *Moby-Dick* as a whole was "like a drawing by William Blake" or "of the 'Ancient Mariner.'" Russell was early in preferring *Moby-Dick* to Melville's other works and also early in admiring it not simply as a superb nautical tale but as a work of poetic imagination set in a nautical frame.

After publishing his article Russell wrote to the American writer A. A. Hayes in Washington, D.C., who showed the letter to W. A. Croffut. On December 14, 1884, Croffut published this badly printed piece in his regular feature in the *New York World,* "Important Trifles":

> In Washington the other day I met A. A. Hayes, a well-known writer of short stories for the magazines. He showed me a letter from W. Clark Russell, the Englishman, whose sea stories are having such a run. "Russell is an American by birth," he said, "though I suppose there are few who know it. He is the son of Henry Russell, who, some thirty-five years ago, was a popular ballad singer, travelling in this country, singing 'A Life on the Ocean Wave,' 'A Fine Old English

> Gentleman,' &c. Clark was born in New York at that time." The letter said: "If my life is spared I hope some day to visit New York and muse, if musing be possible on Broadway, on the site of the old Carleton Hotel, in which I emitted my first cry of suffering—my first illustration of my theory of life. . . . I feel that the best sea stories ever written are those of Henry Melville and Richard H. Dana, jr. If you know that fine writer, Melville, why not write his life? Why not let the world know as much as can be gathered of the seafaring experiences and personal story of the greatest genius your country has produced—leagues ahead of Longfellow and Bryant as a poet. . . . There are no people of old who equal the Americans in their peculiar love [of] ocean and in their methods of expressing a sense of its sublimity."

("Henry" was probably not Russell's error but Croffut's or the compositor's recollection of "Henry Russell.") The Melvilles saved the clipping, undated, Jay Leyda put it in the *Log* at the end of 1873, ascribed to the wrong newspaper, and Dennis Marnon identified it in 2011. As I showed in my second volume and in chapter 5 of *Melville Biography*, on March 26, 1885, Elizabeth Shaw Melville and Melville's cousin Kate Gansevoort Lansing went out to Brentano's, where Kate ordered the back copy of the *Contemporary Review* containing Russell's article. Some of the family may already have read the article, some read it only after the issue arrived. Clark's essay changed the family's attitude toward Melville's literary genius.

The playwright and novelist Charles Reade, older than and apparently independent of the circle of the Pre-Raphaelites and friends of "B. V." read *The Whale* after becoming a Bentley novelist late in 1852. Michael Sadleir saw Reade's copy decades later and recognized that he had thought of making an abridgment of it (*Excursions in Victorian Bibliography*, 1922). Stephen Neal Dennis in 2015 acting for the American owner sent Parker evidence that Reade had marked up the 1853 Bentley issue, three volumes bound as one. Reade's condensation of "Loomings" is stringent—more than half the page starting "Call me Ishmael" marked through, all of the next three pages lined through. At chapter's end Reade x-ed out the five lines down to "one grand hooded phantom, like a snow-hill in the air" and noted: "go from this" to "P. 171," the start of "The Advocate." In 1885, the year after Reade's death, his friend the dramatist and poet Robert Buchanan visited Whitman while staging one of his own plays in Philadelphia and on his return to London published in the *Academy* (August 15, 1885) "Socrates in Camden, with a Look Round," a poem on Whitman that included a tribute to the power of Melville as the

> sea-compelling man,
> Before whose wand Leviathan
> Rose hoary white upon the Deep,
> With awful sounds that stirred its sleep.

Melville, he continued, "Sits all forgotten or ignored, / While haberdashers are adored!" In a footnote Buchanan said he had "sought everywhere for this Triton, who is still living somewhere in New York. No one seemed to know anything of the one great imaginative writer fit to stand shoulder to shoulder with Whitman on that continent." The praise of Melville was extraordinary, and the other comment is puzzling. In New York City Buchanan had visited E. C. Stedman, a neighbor of Melville's, who in

corresponding with British writers while preparing his book on Victorian poetry had formed a notable Swinburne archive and who then was or soon afterward became an adherent of *Moby-Dick,* "its tale often on his lips, and the recommendation by all odds to read it at once to nearly every young writer who sought his counsel" (see Sealts, *Early Lives of Melville,* 1974). Whatever the reason Buchanan did not locate Melville, his footnote may have roused Stedman to make polite overtures to Melville, for Stedman's son Arthur soon made Melville's acquaintance and later became in effect his literary executor, in consultation with Mrs. Melville. Buchanan's fascination with Melville grew, and his *The Outcast,* the political book which went on sale in New York a week or so before Melville died,[1] was a strange homage to him through a mixing of the Flying Dutchman legend with a *Typee*-like romance. The volume concluded with an open letter on the state of his own career and the deplorable state of English publishing, part confessional, part apologia, addressed to an American he had never met, Charles Warren Stoddard, who not only corresponded with both Whitman and Melville but also introduced Melville's works to Robert Louis Stevenson. Buchanan's connection with the Pre-Raphaelites was intense but adversarial, for his "The Fleshly School of Poetry," first published in the *Contemporary Review* (October 1871), so grieved D. G. Rossetti that W. M. Rossetti recalled it as precipitating his breakdown and early death. In so small a literary society mutual enthusiasms among enemies are perhaps inevitable, and no one has shown that there was anything like two sets of rival Whitman or Melville admirers in London.

At some time before 1889 (according to his 1930 *Company I Have Kept*), Henry S. Salt, the all-round humanitarian as well as Fabian Socialist, learned of Melville from the bookseller and publisher Bertram Dobell, the friend of Thomson's who arranged the book publication of *The City of Dreadful Night* (1880); Salt in turn brought *The Whale* to the notice of William Morris, and a week or two afterward heard Morris quoting it "with huge gusto and delight" (Salt, p. 109). Writing his biography of Thomson apparently led Salt into acquaintance with the Leicester admirers of both Thomson and Melville, then into writing an essay on Melville in 1889 and another in 1892. In the second essay Salt said he had been told "of instances in which English working-men became his [Melville's] hearty admirers." Perhaps Billson had communicated to his artisan students a love of Melville as well as of Aristophanes. In 1889, Salt wrote to Melville just after his first essay on him appeared in the *Scottish Art Review.* Knowing that Barrs was sending Melville a copy of the essay, he sent Melville his own recent book on Thomson, thereby reaffirming the confluence of interests Salt and the Leicester admirers shared.

Born at midcentury (in India), Salt could not remember Melville's reception in the 1840s and 1850s, so he pulled down old periodicals to see what contemporary reviewers had said—an act that makes him the first recorded "Melville scholar," as distinguished from reviewer or simple enthusiast. Always high-minded, he looked hard through Melville's early books for signs of "direct ethical teaching" and had to settle for praising Melville's "strong and genuine feeling" on the rather vague subject of

1. See Parker, *Herman Melville* 2.919–20. *The Outcast* is a strange mixture of the *Typee* story and the legend of the Flying Dutchman. Someone could have brought it to Melville's attention in his last days.

humanity as well as a few specific positions such as his opposition to modern warfare. In 1892, after Melville's death, Salt's second Melville article, in *Gentleman's Magazine,* showed that he had come to delight in Melville's language, especially in *The Whale,* which he now praised as a work of "ambitious conception and colossal proportions," the "crown and glory" of Melville's later phase (pp. 253, 252). Here he made good use of Melville's private letters to Billson and in a footnote listed some competent judges who numbered among Melville admirers: William Morris, Theodore Watts, R. L. Stevenson, Robert Buchanan, and W. Clark Russell. The least well remembered of these admirers, the solicitor Walter Theodore Watts, had become intimate with D. G. Rossetti and helped W. M. Rossetti with legal matters after his brother's death. Later, as Theodore Watts-Dunton, he was Swinburne's protector for three decades and on one occasion talked to George Bernard Shaw and Salt about George Meredith and Melville on the way to see Swinburne, "taking it for granted that they had never heard of them, though Salt was a friend of both" (Stephen Winsten, *Salt and His Circle*, 1951, p. 82). (Meredith, as it happened, had reviewed *The Confidence-Man* in the July 1857 *Westminster and Foreign Quarterly Review.*) Shaw himself recorded in a posthumously published preface to Winsten's book that he agreed with Salt on the subject of *Moby-Dick*. Among more radical British literary people, interest in Whitman, Melville, and Thoreau converged, so that in 1894 Salt could write scathingly not only of a "recent unhappy defamation of Walt Whitman" but specifically of "Lowell's malicious misrepresentations of Thoreau" (*Richard Jefferies,* p. 115), that effort of a member of the American literary establishment to suppress a better writer—and better man—than himself. Salt and his friends stood ready to defend the writers they felt were not properly esteemed at home but were known in England among a widening circle of devotees.

Unquestionably Salt was at the center of that circle. In the 1880s and 1890s he initiated correspondence not only with Melville but with other Americans, among them acquaintances of Thoreau and the early Thoreau collector Dr. Samuel A. Jones, and John Burroughs, the admirer of both Whitman and Thoreau, and in 1890 he published his biography of Thoreau, the product of intense and judicious research by transatlantic correspondence. Soon after Melville's death he began a correspondence with Arthur Stedman and was kept informed of the slow progress toward a selected edition of Melville's works. He wrote Dr. Jones on June 9, 1892, after his second article on Melville had been reprinted in the United States: "Did you see my art[icle] on Melville in the *Eclectic* for April? I wonder whether you are a Melville enthusiast? You *ought* to be. He was one of the very greatest of American writers" (Oehlschlaeger and Hendrick, *Toward the Making of Thoreau's Modern Reputation*, 1979, p. 158). Jones's lack of alacrity evoked a further recommendation (p. 166) on November 11, 1892:

> I can't help thinking that you would greatly enjoy Herman Melville's works, if you once got started off on them, especially *Typee* and *The Whale*. They are so full of profound reflection & earnest humanity—I do not know any literature I more heartily enjoy reading. He is undoubtedly one of the great brotherhood of nature-writers.

Dr. Jones had in fact seen Melville years before in a Manhattan bookstore without knowing who he was and without knowing his writings. After Salt's insistence he looked for Melville's books and had the good fortune to become the first major Melville collector we know of. Extended comments on Thoreau and on Whitman, as well as on Melville, run through many of Salt's writings, such as his 1894 *Richard Jefferies: A Study,* in which Salt quoted from a manuscript on Jefferies by Dr. Jones, whom he identified as "a well-known student of Thoreau" (p. 115). In the months before and after Melville's death in September 1891, Salt found that the "literateurs" of the British publishing world, aloof from issues of human nature and society, were threatened by his proposed collection of essays on "the whole *Nature* subject," to be called *The Return to Nature* and to consist of his articles on "Jefferies, Carpenter, Burroughs, Thoreau, Melville, &c, &c." Had Salt found a publisher for *The Return to Nature,* or had he set himself to write a biography of Melville instead of Thoreau, the course of Melville's reputation would have been incalculably but powerfully altered. As it was, he promoted Melville's reputation for decades more, living long enough to give letters Arthur Stedman wrote him to Willard Thorp, the first great academic Melville scholar. Thorp, of course, lived to encourage many Melville students, including, for two decades, me.

Salt also helped the Canadian Archibald MacMechan in his determination to gain recognition for Melville and his masterpiece, *Moby-Dick*. In "The Dean's Window" of the Montreal *Standard* on February 18, 1922, commenting on Raymond Weaver's 1921 biography, MacMechan remembered:

> . . . when I was a boy, far back in the last century, I discovered "Moby Dick" for myself in the dim, dusty Mechanics Institute Library (opened once a week by the old doctor) of an obscure Canadian village. It was like coming on hidden treasure; but no one else seemed to recognize it as precious. In twenty years, I saw only one copy exposed for sale (which I seized at once) and I met only one person, the widow of James de Mille, the novelist, who had ever read the book.

On November 21, 1889, MacMechan wrote to Melville of his admiration of *Moby-Dick* and his conviction that "the unique merits of that book have never received due recognition." Melville was too old to offer him much encouragement, but MacMechan persisted in private. He wrote "The Best Sea Story Ever Written," but "several American editors" assured him "that it was perfectly hopeless to think of reviving public interest in Melville." The article was "eventually" published in the Ontario *Queen's Quarterly*, October 1899. MacMechan sent an offprint to Dr. Samuel A. Jones, who suggested that he send a copy to Salt. In his delighted reply Salt echoed MacMechan's saying he was accustomed to hear people say they "have never heard' of Melville!" and reprinted the article in his new journal, *Humane Review* (October 1901), between, as Frederick J. Kennedy and Joyce Deveau Kennedy say in *Leviathan* (October 1999) "an article on slaughterhouse reform and a play about prison reform." As the Kennedys show, MacMechan used offprints to interest British academics, including Edward Dowden at Trinity College, Dublin. He received assurances that his offprint had been shared and copies of *Moby-Dick* passed around. MacMechan himself, as he said in 1922, "stimulated a small group of Harvard

men to get interested in Melville"—an influential group including Bliss Perry. Just after MacMechan included his article on *Moby-Dick* in *The Life of a Little College, and Other Papers* (1914), Perry made *Moby-Dick* required reading in a comparative literature course. The Kennedys document MacMechan's powerful influence on the United States reputation of *Moby-Dick* with professors at Columbia as well as Harvard. Other admirers of Melville, including several of Salt's friends, passed *Moby-Dick* around: like Salt, but more singlemindedly, MacMechan proselytized for it.

Edward Carpenter, who had been curate for F. D. Maurice, broke with the church, remaining a Socialist and becoming a champion of homosexual love. He was a worshiper first of Shelley, then Whitman, and he knew *Typee* and *Omoo,* but also *The Whale.* Several of his close acquaintances, notably Salt, were Melville admirers. After reading W. M. Rossetti's edition of Whitman he initiated a correspondence with the American poet and made a pilgrimage in 1877 to see Whitman at Camden (he "stayed in the house with him for a week"), then went to Concord to learn about Thoreau (Chushichi Tsuzuki, *Edward Carpenter, 1844–1929*, p. 34). Emerson put him up. Having bathed in Walden Pond, Carpenter on his return sent a copy of *Walden* to William Morris, who thought it presented a one-sided view of life; more important for Thoreau's reputation, he also introduced *Walden* to his Socialist friend Salt. Carpenter's *Towards Democracy* (1896) was a Whitmanesque plea for equality of mankind infused with his ideal of love, which he specified elsewhere as "a powerful, strongly built man, of my own age or rather younger—preferably of the working class" (Tsuzuki, p. 42). There is no reason to question Tsuzuki's observation that an "element of sexual attraction" was present for Carpenter and others "in the fellowship of Socialism, and sustained its moral fervour" (p. 151). Such a sexual element infused the earlier working-men's movement as well. Carpenter, who soon became a spokesman for an idealized notion of homosexuality in works such as *Homogenic Love* (1895), was in the thick of Melville admirers. On July 19, 1890, Havelock Ellis asked Melville for information about his ancestry at about the time he was using Carpenter as a major case study of homosexuality. Ellis's intimate friend Salt resorted to Chapter 3 of *Moby-Dick* in describing an occasion when Carpenter was left looking "a sort of diabolically funny" ("Sage at Close Quarters," p. 199); Augustine Birrell, mentioned later, was a friend from Carpenter's Cambridge years. In *Iölaus* (1902) Carpenter used Melville's "reliable" first two books to illustrate male friendship customs in the pagan world, quoting first the account of the Polynesian habit "of making bosom friends at the shortest possible notice" (from *Omoo,* Chap. 39) then the description of the "Polynesian Apollo" Marnoo (from *Typee,* Chap. 18). Carpenter had enormous influence not only on his contemporaries at home and abroad but also on at least two younger writers who were also profoundly influenced by Melville—D. H. Lawrence and E. M. Forster.

Melville had endured many jests in the press about his fickleness in abandoning the charming Fayaway and marrying the daughter of Judge Lemuel Shaw. Jonathan Katz in *Gay American History* (1976) describes Stoddard's debt to Melville in "A South Sea Idyl." In *Gay/Lesbian Almanac* (1983) Katz shows that Carpenter's *Homogenic Love* was read in the canyons of northern California in the 1890s by men who were corresponding with Carpenter. It may well turn out that in the nineteenth century

Stoddard was far from the only American man who responded to Kory-Kory more than to Fayaway.

Undeniably, for many readers, male or female, the appeal of *The Whale* or *Moby-Dick* during its gradual discovery was grounded in part on the fact that by style and subject matter it could nurture a class-bridging philanthropic idealism not without an element of seductive eroticism. The late-nineteenth-century British admirers of Whitman, Melville, and Thoreau were driven by industrialization, urban poverty, and repressive moral codes to look afresh at all human institutions (conspicuously including Christianity) and at man's relationship with nature. Hawthorne in *The Scarlet Letter* (Chap. 18) had made his position clear on the lawless thoughts that visited Hester Prynne. When she looked from an "estranged point of view at human institutions" she showed that in her suffering she had been taught "much amiss." That conservatism marked Hawthorne as irrelevant to most of the early British admirers of Melville, Whitman, and Thoreau. In their social idealism they were willing to experiment with ways of establishing on a surer ground of mutual happiness not only what Hawthorne called "the whole relation between man and woman" (Chap. 24) but also the whole relation between man and man. To be true to their principled radicalism these British admirers excluded no aspect of life from idealistic experimentation: being social idealists led logically to their being sexual idealists and sexual explorers. To be sure, some of them drank heavily. One was court-martialed for a tantalizingly vague offense that apparently occurred while swimming with other men. They included some celibates (temporary or long-term), some male homosexuals and bisexuals, apparently a fetishist or two, more than one man who although heterosexual (or possibly either homosexual or celibate by preference) married lesbians. (Carpenter gave Kate Salt a name for her sexual status—"an Urning," thereby arming her in her refusal to consummate her marriage.) Some of them strained or violated social and sexual conventions in various ways—tolerating a ménage à trois out of respect for the principle of another's freedom, living more or less communally for extended periods, displaying an unusual intensity in male-male relationships, keeping a mistress or living so as to be suspected of keeping one, cohabiting with a divorced woman, marrying a divorced woman. There was not a libertine among them.

Concurrent with the enthusiasm about Melville among survivors of or connections of the Pre-Raphaelite writer-artists and adherents of the working-men's movement and Fabian Socialism, and to some extent independently, a reevaluation of Melville was going on among other British writers—sea-writers like W. Clark Russell, travelers and out-of-doors men, men who had been to the far reaches of the empire, where *Typee* and *Omoo,* standard works in John Murray's Colonial and Home Library, had also penetrated decade after decade, *Typee* in the unexpurgated text. (Rudyard Kipling, a nephew of the wife of the Pre-Raphaelite Edward Burne-Jones, appropriately put some books by Melville on his reading list for the Empire League.) In regions remote from London *The Whale* was sometimes passed hand to hand under strange circumstances. By 1872, Kevin Hayes showed in 2016, the London-born Marcus Clarke was celebrating *Moby-Dick* in Melbourne, Australia. In 1880 Clarke's friend Garnet Walch praised "the most powerful, most poetical, most weirdly

fascinating book," *Moby-Dick*, which he happened "to have been reading" for "probably the tenth time." Clarke loaned a copy to William Senior, editor of a London sporting magazine, who wrote in 1899: "having once begun *Moby-Dick*, I was so fascinated with it that I did not stir from my chair until I had finished it, and then the day was breaking." Senior shared his enthusiasm with English friends, loaning his copy to the novelist Morley Roberts, who "read and re-read" it then "wallowed in whale for weeks." Much later, Roberts said the naturalist W. H. Hudson had introduced him to *Moby-Dick*, but his memory was at fault though his enthusiasm remained high. In the early 1870s "a sweet, dainty little English lady" came aboard a small trading schooner in Apea, in the Samoas, and gave the "grizzled old captain" some books, offering the three volumes of *The Whale* as "the strangest, wildest, and saddest story I have ever read." The captain read the entire three volumes aloud to the crew, which included the sea-writer-to-be Louis Becke, who told the story as the introduction to Putnam's 1901 London issue of *Moby-Dick*. In the 1960s at my request Richard Colles Johnson acquired a photocopy of Becke's introduction from the holder of the only known copy, the British Library. No one is on record as having been moved by Becke's remarkable account until I read it then and put it in *"Moby-Dick" as Doubloon*. One of the greatest tributes to Melville could have been lost. But it might have been found, later on, for on December 4, 2011, Nigel Cross emailed me that he owned a nice copy of the 1901 Putnam's edition "inscribed from J. M. Barrie to Arthur Quiller Couch [known as "Q"] with the latter's book plate." Something of a decent association copy indeed! and proving the point of this essay about how literary people passed Melville around by hand. Barrie, of course, used *Typee* and *Moby-Dick* in *Peter Pan*. What did Q say about Melville in print or in private?

By the 1890s Hannay was dead, but Russell and the young Becke were far from the only living voyager-authors or authors-to-be who cherished a love of *Moby-Dick*. In the summer of 1896, as a teenage laborer in a Yonkers carpet mill, John Masefield made up a short list of sea-authors he had not read and bought some Melvilles (including *Moby-Dick*) from a Sixth Avenue book dealer. He appreciated the "masterly account" of New Bedford, and his love of Melville grew. During the 1890s W. H. Hudson and Morley Roberts talked about *Moby-Dick* (and about Richard Jefferies). Afterward Roberts recalled that he and Hudson often "wondered how it was that the Americans still looked forward to some great American book when all they had to do was to cast their eyes backward and find it." By the first years of the twentieth century Hudson had also talked about the book with Joseph Conrad, whose fulminations against *The Whale* on January 15, 1907 ("a rather strained rhapsody with whaling for a subject and not a single sincere line in the 3 vols of it") are so excessive as to arouse suspicions that he was denying a rival he saw as powerful, if not denying an influence on his own work (Parker and Hayford, *"Moby-Dick" as Doubloon,* 123). The American artist Peter Toft (whom Melville dispatched in 1886 with greetings to Russell, who had not been sure that Melville was still alive) introduced *Moby-Dick* to the sea-novelist Frank T. Bullen; later Bullen in turn talked about the book with J. St. Loe Strachey (whose cousin John Addington Symonds was obsessed with the poetry and the life example of Walt Whitman). Hudson in 1917 predicted that in time Thoreau would be regarded as "one without master or mate," in the

"foremost ranks of the prophets"—evidence that some of these travel-writer and nautical-writer admirers of Melville shared either Buchanan's dual enthusiasm for Whitman and Melville or the frequent enthusiasm of the Pre-Raphaelites and the supporters of the working-men's movement and the Fabian Socialists for Whitman or Thoreau (or both) as well as Melville.

These lovers of *The Whale* or *Moby-Dick* in the decades before the centennial of Melville's birth sometimes declared their love for it publicly and sometimes treated it as a self-identifying and other-identifying token. H. M. Tomlinson in the *Nation and Athenæum* in 1922 reported what he had learned about the work as a talisman:

> That book, indeed, appears to have been a wonder treasured as a sort of secret for years by some select readers who had chanced upon it. They said little about it. We gather that they had been in the habit of hinting the book to friends they could trust, so that "Moby Dick" became a sort of cunning test by which genuineness of another man's response to literature could be proved. If he was not startled by "Moby Dick," then his opinion on literature was of little account. It should be observed, however, that the victim was never told this, because this test was made by those who seemed scared by the intensity of their own feelings aroused by the strange, subliminal potency of the monster called the White Whale. (p. 857)

Some lovers of the book had taken greater risks than handing someone else a book: in the year of Melville's death a young teacher in Baltimore, Edward Lucas White, invited another young man, Frank Jewett Mather, to his rooms and read to him from *Moby-Dick,* thereby initiating one of the most important American enthusiasms for Melville. If Houghton Mifflin had not refused in 1906 to give him the five-hundred-dollar advance he needed, Mather would have proceeded with a biography of Melville, with the cooperation of Melville's daughter Bessie.

Such sharing of the book, even between heterosexual men, was not without the component of ritual bonding, for reading aloud usually occurred in companionable seclusion and required from the initiate the intense intimacy of becoming alive to Melville's words not through his own eyes but through the voice of the reader. To say the least, in this sort of sharing more was at stake than the possible validation of the reader's own advanced literary judgment. And in discussing the appeal of Melville to the British admirers from the last decades of his life through the 1920s it is essential also to remember the way William Morris read the book and immediately began quoting it with "huge gusto and delight." The "bold and nervous lofty language" that Melville had created in the book, and the humbler but equally memorable quaintnesses of phrasings, took rank in his admirers' minds with phrases from Shakespeare and were irresistibly sharable.

In the next generation Melville's most famous admirers would include men (D. H. Lawrence and T. E. Lawrence—Lawrence of Arabia—are obvious examples) who devoted about as much passionate writing to male-male relationships as to male-female relationships, as well as bisexual women, most notably Virginia Woolf. Even though Melville did not come, as Whitman and Thoreau did, with a social program in hand, the British admirers saw him as having learned to think the way they wanted to think, "untraditionally and independently." Equally appealing to these writers

was his intense awareness of his own "moods of thought," his phrase in *Pierre* (book 24.1), and his capacity for analyzing and evoking complicated moods of body and mind, often in relationship to the physical universe and to the fellowship of all human beings (among whom, as many of his admirers were keenly aware, were well-muscled men whose appeal was not diminished by their not always being of the white race and not always being altogether fluent in the English language). Part of Melville's special appeal to his British admirers came from specific scenes of male bonding as well as from his more general underlying feeling of brotherhood with all men. A substantial set of Melvilleans from late in his own time to the present has consisted of male (and some female) homosexuals or bisexuals, men and women who can become influential out of proportion to their absolute numbers (however high those numbers are) in artistic and literary circles—journalistic critics, academic critics, editors, bibliographers, rare book dealers, publishers, and writers as diverse as Carl Van Vechten, Lawrence of Arabia, E. M. Forster, W. H. Auden, Malcolm Lowry, and Angus Wilson. It is past time for professors of queer theory and gay studies professors to abandon the Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick stereotypes and look at American and English admirers of Melville in their full family, societal, and cultural contexts.

Little enough is known about the relationship between sexual orientation and the cherishing and sharing of literary works (certainly not in relation to Melville). Little was said until recently about the much larger topic of the relationship between aesthetic responses, sexual stimulation, and social and cosmic questionings—a topic that must form a part of any history of the reputation of *The Whale* and *Moby-Dick*. In his supercharged psychological, aesthetic, and intellectual unfolding that culminated in 1851 and early 1852, Melville recognized something very like what modern French literary theorists call the pleasures of the text and devised a style that he thought would allow him to write about such a forbidden topic. Very likely the first literary writing he did after finishing *Moby-Dick* was the opening of *Pierre* as we know it, where Pierre simultaneously thrills from the onset of puberty and the effect of imaginative eroticism in literature, *The Faerie Queene* recognized as pornographic.

The Melville Revival that began in nineteenth-century London simmered there until the centennial of Melville's birth, 1919. The term was justifiably used in the *New York Times Saturday Review of Books* on July 22, 1899, where "T. B. F." reported in "Book News in London" on "a conspicuous revival of interest in America's sea author," the result of W. Clark Russell's "repeated glowing tributes." Russell deserves such credit, but it took dozens of men and women over the course of four decades to bring about the rediscovery of Melville and *Moby-Dick*. In the first two decades of the twentieth century John Masefield repeatedly praised *Moby-Dick* in his books and in interviews. Not all his early tributes to Melville have been located, but in *A Mainsail Haul* (1905) he put an evocative prose fantasy into the mouth of an old sailor named Blair. In this "Port of Many Ships" the "great white whale, old Moby Dick, the king of all the whales," leads all the other whales of the world in raising all the sunken ships and drowned sailors and towing them "to where the sun is." Then "the red ball will swing open like a door, and Moby Dick, and all the whales, and all the ships will rush through it into a grand anchorage in Kingdom Come"

(pp. 24–26). During this time W. H. Hudson was as loyal an admirer as Masefield, and as I have mentioned, Melville's influence was plain in the writings of James M. Barrie. Many of the admirers from the 1890s survived for decades—G. B. Shaw, H. S. Salt, and other Fabians spanned literary generations—but did they talk much about Melville to younger friends in the 1910s? There were living links between the Pre-Raphaelite admirers of Melville and the Bloomsbury crowd. (Around 1915 Ford Madox Hueffer encouraged D. H. Lawrence and introduced him to Edward Garnett, who had corresponded with Melville—but did they mention Melville to each other?) Little evidence has yet been brought forth, but a surprising number of Lady Ottaline Morrell's friends came to know *The Whale* or *Moby-Dick*. Among them were Augustine Birrell (born like Salt in midcentury) and younger literary people—Walter de la Mare, D. H. Lawrence, J. D. Beresford (in whose Cornwall cottage Lawrence first read *The Whale,* in 1916), later Virginia Woolf, Leonard Woolf, Lytton Strachey, and Aldous Huxley. De la Mare knew Alice Meynell (mother of Viola Meynell, who emerged as an enthusiast in 1920) and John Freeman, who in 1926 became the first Englishman to write a book on Melville. We know that some of these people were among the secret sharers of *The Whale* or *Moby-Dick* in the 1910s, but the proof is yet fragmentary and elusive.

That proof will come in large part from the Internet (which will lead to yet undigitized manuscript archives), but sometimes old-fashioned book searching will produce surprises. I buy copies of Raymond Weaver's biography when I can. After all, he never returned Melville's drawing of Arrowhead to his granddaughter Eleanor Metcalf, so the nearest thing to it is the reproduction in *Herman Melville: Mariner and Mystic*. Maybe, just maybe, Melville's original drawing is stuck in some copy. I bought a copy on eBay around 2002, one Weaver had inscribed to Thomas Monro, who had stashed clippings in it. Among the discolored and torn clippings was an article titled "Passing on the Torch," a partial reprint from the "Gossip Shop" in *The Bookman* of February 1922, presumably by John Farrar. (Now you can easily find it online.) Here is the full text, italicized to emphasize the extraordinary claims set forth in it:

> *The history of "Moby Dick", Melville's titanic dramatization of human fortitude and implacable resolve, has been the history of a book's laudation by literary artists who recognized in Melville an artist who transcended all that they themselves could do in words. The most interesting genealogy of "book recommending," the passing on of a torch from one hand to another, was supplied one day recently by James Stephens, the wizard who wrote "The Crock of Gold," "Mary, Mary," and "The Demi-Gods." Reveling over "Moby-Dick" with Samuel McCoy, who has just returned from Ireland, Stephens said:*
>
> *"Did I ever tell you how I first heard of the book? George Meredith, who was about twenty years old when 'Moby Dick' was first published, read it, recognized a master in Melville, and passed the book on to Watts-Dunton. Watts-Dunton, equally enthralled, urged Dante Gabriel Rossetti to read it. Rossetti ran with it to Swinburne, crying out that Swinburne must read it. Swinburne, finding in it the roar of the sea described as he himself could not, with all his music, silently passed it on to Oscar Wilde, then the most glittering star among the literary lights of London. Wilde, a Dubliner, handed the book on to another*

> *Irishman, young William Butler Yeats, making, as he did so, an epigram on Melville's greatness that would be worth repeating—if I could remember it. Yeats, coming back from London to Dublin, brought a copy of the book with him and presented it to George Russell, 'A.E.,' essayist, poet, painter, and seer, commanding him by all the ancient gods of Eire to read it at once. And 'A.E.,' chanting solemn rhapsodies through his beard, handed it on to us, his disciples. I pass it on to all I know, as the greatest prose work in the English tongue.*
>
> *"Melville," added Stephens thoughtfully, "was the last of the bards. He was wider than Shakespeare."*
>
> *Pronounced on the afternoon of August 7, 1921, in the dingy little dining room of the hotel in Galway town on the west coast of Ireland, where bearded sailors from all the ports of the world once drank Spanish wine in the Galway inns.*

I knew the 1922 *Nation and Athenæum* article quoted earlier. I knew the story of how around the turn of the last century Sir Alfred Lyall had casually passed *The Whale* to friends along with other books, making no special mention of it. If they returned it with perfunctory thanks, he had taken their measure. If they came back raving, they were to be clasped as lifelong friends. I had made many connections already, identifying those who were known to have passed *The Whale* or *Moby-Dick* on to a friend, and the Kennedys had made others. This account in the *Bookman* is so wonderfully specific that I want to believe the whole of it. I want to know how much truth there is in the story of what was sworn to in the dingy little dining room of the hotel in Galway town on the west coast of Ireland. Who will go to the archives and to the databases and expose it as in part a fabrication or triumphantly verify all of it in the course of writing a fine book on what the Melville Revival owes to such loving readers?

Literary Criticism

WALTER E. BEZANSON

[The Dynamic in *Moby-Dick*: Ishmael's Voices]†

By the term "dynamic" I mean the action of forces on bodies at rest. The whaling matter in *Moby-Dick* is in no sense at rest, excepting as here or there occurs a failure in effect. For the most part the stuff and data of whaling are complexly subject to the action of a force which can be defined and illustrated. So too is the whole narrative base of the book, which is something far more than a record of what anyone aboard the *Pequod* would agree had happened. There is a dynamic operating on both matter and narrative which distinguishes *Moby-Dick* from logs, journals, and histories.

One of two forces, or their combination, is commonly assumed to provide the dynamic of *Moby-Dick*. The first, of course, is Captain Ahab, the dark protagonist, the maimed king of the quarter-deck whose monomania flows out through the ship until it drowns his men—mind and (finally) body. That he is the dominant "character" and the source of "action" seems obvious. The reader's image of him is a lasting one. Is Ahab the dynamic?

The alternative force, it is commonly assumed, is Moby Dick himself, that particular white "spouting fish with a horizontal tail" about whom legend and murmured lore have woven enchantments, so that he looms a massive phantom in the restless dreams of the *Pequod's* captain and crew. His name gives the novel its title. He is prime antagonist of the tale. Is Moby Dick the dynamic?

Both these interpretations have their uses, especially when taken together in a subject-predicate relation. But there is a third point of view from which neither Ahab nor the White Whale is the central dynamic, and I find it both compelling and rewarding, once recognized. This story, this fiction, is not so much about Ahab or the White Whale as it is about Ishmael, and I propose that it is he who is the real center of meaning and the defining force of the novel.

The point becomes clearer when one realizes that in *Moby-Dick* there are two Ishmaels, not one. The first Ishmael is the enfolding sensibility of

† From "*Moby-Dick*: Work of Art," in *Moby-Dick: Centennial Essays*, ed. Tyrus Hillway and Luther S. Mansfield (Dallas: Southern Methodist University Press, 1953), pp. 35–42. Bezanson (1912–2011) read this paper at Oberlin College on November 13, 1951, at exercises to commemorate the one hundredth year since the publication of *Moby-Dick*. This is Section 2. At the end of Section 1 Bezanson says: "In *Moby-Dick* the inert matter of whaling has been subjected to the purposes of art through a dynamic and a structure." The "dynamic" is the subject of Section 2, still the most eloquent "evocation" of the mature and the younger Ishmael.

the novel, the hand that writes the tale, the imagination through which all matters of the book pass. He is the narrator. But who then is the other Ishmael? The second Ishmael is not the narrator, not the informing presence, but is the young man of whom, among others, narrator Ishmael tells us in his story. He is simply one of the characters in the novel, though, to be sure a major one whose significance is possibly next to Ahab's. This is forecastle Ishmael or the younger Ishmael of "some years ago." There is no question here of dual personality or *alter ego*, such as really exists, for instance, in Poe's "William Wilson" or Conrad's "The Secret Sharer." Narrator Ishmael is merely young Ishmael grown older. He is the man who has already experienced all that we watch forecastle Ishmael going through as the story is told.

The distinction can be rendered visual by imagining, for a moment, a film version of the novel. As the screen lights up and the music drops to an obbligato we look on the face of narrator Ishmael (a most marvelous face, I should judge), and the magic intonation begins:

> Call me Ishmael. Some years ago—never mind how long precisely—having little or no money in my purse, and nothing particular to interest me on shore, I thought I would sail about a little and see the watery part of the world. It is a way I have of driving off the spleen, and regulating the circulation. Whenever I find myself . . .

And as the cadenced voice goes on, the face of the Ishmael who has a tale to tell fades out, the music takes up a brisk piping air, and whom should we see tripping along the cobbled streets of New Bedford, carpetbag in hand, but forecastle Ishmael. It is a cold winter's night, and this lonely young man is in search of lodgings. For very soon now he plans to go a-whaling.

Meanwhile we hear the voice, always the magic voice, not of the boy we watch with our eyes, but of one who long since went aboard the *Pequod*, was buried in the sea and resurrected from it. This voice recounts the coming adventures of young Ishmael as a story already fully experienced. Experienced, but not fully understood; for as he explicitly says: "It was the whiteness of the whale that above all things appalled me. But how can I hope to explain myself here; and yet, in some dim, random way, explain myself I must, else all these chapters might be naught." So we are reminded by shifts of tense from time to time that while forecastle Ishmael is busy hunting whales narrator Ishmael is sifting memory and imagination in search of the many meanings of the dark adventure he has experienced. So deeply are we under the spell of the narrator's voice that when at last the final incantation begins—"'And I only am escaped alone to tell thee'. . . . The drama's done. . . ."—then at last, as forecastle Ishmael floats out of the *Pequod's* vortex, saved, we look again on the face of Ishmael narrator. And we realize that for many hours he has been sitting there and has never once moved, except at the lips; sitting in profound reverie, yet talking, trying to explain "in some dim, random way" what happened, for "explain myself I must."

The distinction between the function of the two Ishmaels is clear. Yet it would be a mistake to separate them too far in temperament. Certainly young Ishmael is no common sailor thoughtlessly enacting whatever the fates throw his way. He is a pondering young man of strong imagination and complex temperament; he will, as it were, become the narrator in due

time. But right now he is aboard the *Pequod* doing his whaleman's work and trying to survive the spell of Ahab's power. The narrator, having survived, is at his desk trying to explain himself to himself and to whoever will listen. The primary use of the distinction is to bring the narrator forward as the essential sensibility in terms of which all characters and events of the fiction are conceived and evaluated. The story is his. What, then, are some of his primary commitments of mind and imagination as he shapes his story through one hundred and thirty-five chapters?

As a lover of laughter and hilarity, Ishmael delights in the incongruities. Of whales, for instance: whales spout steam because they think so much; they have no nose, but don't really need one—there are no violets in the sea; they are very healthy, and this is because they get so much exercise and are always out of doors, though rarely in the fresh air; and they like to breakfast on "sailor tarts, that is whaleboats full of mariners." Ishmael has too a deep belly laugh for the crudities and obscenities that mark the life of animal man, making much more than is proper of some talk about gentlemen harpooning ladies, relishing a Rabelaisian remark about "head winds" versus "winds from astern," and penning a memorable canonization of a rarely discussed part of the anatomy in "The Cassock." But as a purveyor of the "genial, desperado philosophy," his most characteristic humor is that of the hyena laugh: he begins his tale with a mock confession of suicidal impulses; he sends young Ishmael running to his bunk after his first encounter with a whale to make out his will; he reports that some sailors are so neat that they wouldn't think of drowning "without first washing their faces"; and he delights in Queequeg's solemn decision, when he seems mortally ill, whereby the good savage suddenly "recalled a little duty ashore, which he was leaving undone; and therefore . . . changed his mind about dying." Beneath Ishmael's mask of hypochondria is the healthy grimace of a man who stands braced to accept "the universal thump" and to call out: "Who ain't a slave?" To Ishmael "a good laugh is a mighty good thing, and rather too scarce a good thing; the more's the pity."

As narrator Ishmael betrays a passion for all faraway places and things, "Patagonian sights and sounds," imagined cities, fabled heroes, the sepulchers of kings. His rich imagination is stirred by all that is secret, mysterious, and undecipherable in the great riddles of mankind. He both cherishes and mocks the great systems of the philosophers, the operations of "chance, free will, and necessity," the great religions and heresies of the past. His fascination with ancient lore and wisdom runs from Adam to Zoroaster; to help him tell his tale he marshals the great mythic figures of past centuries and all black-letter commentaries thereon.

His temperament is complex. If one of its facets, that of the "Sub-Sub-Librarian," has an antiquarian glint, another glows with the love of action. Each cry from the masthead alerts him from dreamy speculations to the zest of the hunt. Every lowering away starts his blood pounding. He is a superb narrator of the frenzied strivings of the boat crew as they press in for the kill, chanting their terror and competence as they enter "the charmed, churned circle" of eternity. When the death-deed is done, when the whirl slowly widens, he takes up the song of dismemberment. For the weapons of the chase, the red tools of slaughter, the facts of procedure, he has an insatiable curiosity. Cutting in, trying out, stowing down—the whole butcher-slab routine of processing the dead whale he endows with

ritual certainty, transforming dirty jobs into acts of ceremonial dignity. Ishmael's voice translates the laughter and wild deeds of the bloody crew into the ordered rites of primitive tribal priests.

Narrator Ishmael has an instinct for the morally and psychologically intricate. He presses close in after the intertwinings of good and evil, tracks down the baffling crisscross of events and ideas, ponders their ambiguities and inversions. He is keen for a paradox and quick to see polarities—so keen in fact that the whole experience seems a double vision of what is at once noble and vile, of all that is lovely and appalling. This two-fold sensitivity marks his probing into the life-images of those he has known—whether in his grand-scale exposition of the "ungodly, god-like man, Captain Ahab" or in the compassionate recollection of little Pip, for a time lost over-board in the "heartless immensity" of the sea, and gone divinely mad from it. Whether noting that Queequeg's tomahawk-pipe "both brained his foes and soothed his soul" or contemplating "the interlinked terrors and wonders of God," he turns the coin both ways. He makes it a crisis of the first order that young Ishmael, both a brooder and a good companion, was drawn with the rest of the crew by the dark magnetic pull of the captain's monomania, wavering between allegiance to that uncommon king—Ahab—and to "the kingly commons"—the crew. Only the traumatic revulsion on the night of "The Try-Works" saved young Ishmael—"a strange (and ever since inexplicable) thing" which the narrator now explains symbolically: "Give not thyself up, then, to fire, lest it invert thee, deaden thee; as for the time it did me."

Above all one notes the narrator's inexhaustible sense of wonder. Wonder at the wide Pacific world, with its eternal undulations; wonder at the creatures of the deep; wonder at man—dreamer, doer, doubter. To him in retrospect the whale has become a mighty analogue of the world, of man, of God. He is in awe before the whale: its massive bulk, tiny eyes, great mouth, white teeth; its narrow throat and cavernous belly; the spout; the hump; the massed buttress of its domed head; the incomparable power and magic of its fanning, delicate tail. It is wonder that lies at the center of Ishmael's scale of articulation, and the gamut runs out either way toward fear and worship.

Enough of evocation. Every reader of *Moby-Dick* can and will want to enlarge and subtilize the multiple attributes of Ishmael. The prime experience for the reader is the narrator's unfolding sensibility. With it we have an energy center acting outward on the inert matter of nature and experience, releasing its possibilities for art. Whereas forecastle Ishmael drops in and out of the narrative with such abandon that at times a reader wonders if he has fallen overboard, the Ishmael voice is there every moment from the genesis of the fiction in "Call me Ishmael" to the final revelation of the "Epilogue" when "The drama's done." It is the narrator who creates the microcosm and sets the terms of discourse.

But this Ishmael is only Melville under another name, is he not? My suggestion is that we resist any one-to-one equation of Melville and Ishmael. Even the "Melville-Ishmael" phrase, which one encounters in critical discussions, though presumably granting a distinction between autobiography and fiction, would seem to be only a more insistent confusion of the point at stake unless the phrase is defined to mean either Melville or Ishmael, not both. For in the process of composition, even when

the artist knowingly begins with his own experience, there are crucial interventions between the act that was experience and the re-enactment that is art—intrusions of time, of intention, and especially of form, to name only a few. Which parts of Ishmael's experience and sensibility coincide with Melville's own physical and psychological history and in just what ways is a question which is initially only tangential to discussion of *Moby-Dick* as a completed work of art.

HARRISON HAYFORD

"Loomings": Yarns and Figures in the Fabric†

A linked image cluster that recurs throughout Melville's works also figures centrally in the initial chapter of *Moby-Dick*. My aim in this essay is to demonstrate how some recurrent items ("images") and topics ("motifs") in "Loomings" carry a few basic strands of thought ("themes") in the book; how these elements relate to each other; and also how they relate to syntax, rhetoric, and such larger elements as the book's characters, plot, and thought. My analysis takes up elements as they occur locally in Chapter I and relates them to similar elements in other parts of the work. The immediate effect of my discussion is to illustrate the dense imaginative coherence of *Moby-Dick*. Its images, motifs, and themes are yarns closely woven into figures in its fabric, as the chapter title "Loomings" can be taken to imply.

Somewhat arbitrarily, I focus my discussion on the element of character. Specifically, I focus on Ishmael and on the ways in which the elements I analyze show similarities and differences between him and Ahab. My critical strategy is to take the narrative, from its opening sentence "Call me Ishmael," as altogether the work of Ishmael, its ostensible narrator, and to interpret all its elements as coming from Ishmael and hence characterizing Ishmael, not Melville. In this way the dense imaginative coherence is transferred from the book and its author to the mind of Ishmael as its ground and cause. In this perspective, the action of the work takes place in the observing and participating mind of Ishmael. His mind "contains" the tragedy of Ahab as Ishmael confronted it some years ago in experience and now confronts it once again in the telling. Of course this approach is not new, for perhaps the chief discovery criticism has made in the interpretation of *Moby-Dick* in the past generation is to recognize the presence and centrality of Ishmael. Most earlier critics had overlooked him altogether because they were so taken by Ahab and the White Whale. A close corollary perception has been recognition of the thematic

† From *Artful Thunder*: *Versions of the Romantic Tradition in American Literature, in Honor of Howard P. Vincent*, ed. Robert J. DeMott and Sanford E. Marovitz (Kent, OH: Kent State University Press, 1976), pp. 119–36. Copyright © 1975 by Kent State University Press. Reprinted with permission of the publisher. Harrison Hayford (1916–2001) read "Loomings" at the Kent State University celebration organized by Howard P. Vincent for Melville's 150th birthday, August 1, 1969. "Loomings" remained hard to lay hand on until it was included in the Second Norton Critical Edition of *Moby-Dick*, and it is also available in Hayford's posthumous *Melville's Prisoner's* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 2003). The title essay of *Melville's Prisoners* is a meditation on the Hotel de Cluny passage in Ch. 41, which, Hayford explained, "always affected him with unusual power": "Melville's imagination, as he composed a work, repeatedly produced a cluster of motifs and images" in which a prisoner, in prison, confronts some superior or massive object embodying (any or all) power, mystery, and injustice.

importance of the juxtaposition between Ishmael and Ahab. Both points are now usually taken for granted in interpretations of the book, however at odds readings may otherwise be. Neither point, though, entails taking the whole work as Ishmael's—a strategy I am adopting here provisionally and only for convenience.

One further bit of strategy needs a word. All along I refer to Ahab in the present tense. This is the way we usually discuss a fictional character, since we imagine him dramatically alive as we read, though the narrative is told in past tense and we may know the story ends with his death. In *Moby-Dick* Ishmael only occasionally makes any point of Ahab's being already dead and gone, and for my purposes no harm is done by my not doing so. On the other hand, since it is of more consequence that Ishmael is narrating in the present tense, I use tenses for him that distinguish between Ishmael at the time of the *Pequod*'s voyage and Ishmael at the later time he is telling about it. What is involved in Ishmael-then vs. Ishmael-now is the quite unsettled interpretive problem of Ishmael's development in character and outlook. It is not part of my purpose to deal with this problem here. Let me simply declare that in my reading he did not change and has not changed, from then to now, in his essential nature. Ishmael is forever Ishmael. Call him Ishmael.

I

In *Moby-Dick* Ishmael plays the role—a frequent one in Melville's writings—of sympathetic but perplexed observer. What he chiefly confronts and observes is the tragedy of Ahab in his revengeful attack upon the great White Whale. In this perspective the book's early chapters are preparation for Ahab. Before Ahab's appearance, Ishmael builds up in them the physical and conceptual worlds which make probable Ahab's character, his language, his thought, and his actions. In "Loomings" Ishmael starts on his narrative way as participant and observer. As he tells the story, his manner with words, his habitual ways of perceiving and dealing with situations, his preoccupations of thought, all reveal his character. Through these means the first chapter begins to establish the grounds both of Ishmael's sympathy with Ahab and of the differences between them that mark his dissociation from Ahab.

An initial similarity between Ishmael and Ahab is the way both of them turn every object, situation, and person they confront into a problem, one which cannot be solved, a mystery whose lurking meaning cannot be followed to its ultimate elucidation. This habit of mind shapes the rhetorical form of the first chapter; and many later chapters also take the shape of their development from it. Chapters of exposition, especially, often treat their subjects as problematical and end up by declaring them inexplicable. But narrative chapters, too, are frequently constructed on a pattern of confrontation-exploration-nonsolution of a problem.

Simply in vocabulary items, apart from context, this propensity of Ishmael's is illustrated. In this very first chapter, for example, wonder and mystery are constantly being evoked, at the same time that inability to solve or to understand is being declared. One running series of words connotes wonder and mystery: *magic, enchanting, romantic, tranced, charm,*

mystical, marvelous, secretly, portentous and mysterious, marvels, wonder-world, hooded phantom. Intertwined with these words runs another series denoting or evoking inability to solve or identify: *ungraspable, invisible, secretly, unaccountable, unimaginable, undeliverable*. The two series continue intertwined throughout the book, and as vocabulary items alone they imply not only a habit of Ishmael's perception but a major thematic proposition of the book: life—the cosmos and everything in it taken as a microcosm—confronts man as a compelling but insoluble mystery.

In the first chapter, Ishmael sets out to tell the story of this particular whaling voyage. But no further along than his third sentence, the narrative mode shades into exposition, as Ishmael begins explaining his reasons not only for having gone on this voyage but for his voyaging in general. And then, by the end of the first paragraph, the reasons themselves have come to require explanation; the problem has arisen of communicating some sense of his feelings toward the ocean, feelings which, though nearly universal, are not easy for him to convey in statements. Already the narrative has generated what I take to be a basic motif of the book: that of confronting an insoluble problem.

Why he went to sea has become, in the telling, a problem to Ishmael. Initially it is a problem in communicating just what it is that he felt and feels, but soon it becomes something of a problem to himself. For to Ishmael, as to Ahab, motives have lower and yet lower layers. While Ishmael is developing this problem of his motivation it splits into three successive questions: 1. Why does he go to sea? (paragraphs 1–6) 2. Why does he go as a common sailor? (paragraphs 7–11) 3. And why did he go that voyage on a whaler rather than on a merchant ship? (paragraphs 11–14).

As Ishmael deals with each of these three questions through the rest of the chapter, he shows further traits of mind and patterns of reaction which he shares with Ahab. But in his treatment of each question, and especially of the second, he also reveals traits which set him off from Ahab, and which, indeed, define a crucial distinction between them.

II

To answer his first question—why he goes to sea (initially why he went on this particular voyage)—Ishmael begins with two immediately assignable conditions, both of them negative and somewhat aimless rather than positive reasons: he had little money in his purse and nothing in particular to interest him on shore. Then he adds his general motive for going to sea not only on that voyage but at various times: he says it is a way he has of driving off the spleen—driving off spells of melancholy—and a substitute for his impulses toward violence against others or himself whenever he feels depressed. But actually his motives on that and other such occasions, he realizes, reach deeper than these personal ones, specific or general; there is something universal in them. For nearly all men, he says, share his feelings towards the ocean.

Next, to suggest that which he cannot analyze in what he declares is an almost universal feeling towards the ocean, he leaps at once (paragraph 3) from declarative statements to a series of parallel analogies couched in imperatives and interrogatives. He exhorts us to confront, and, if we can,

to explain the meaning of a series of analogical situations, stated in various images. The basic motif these situations exemplify is confrontation: in each situation men are drawn toward water, gaze fixedly upon it, and meditate its mystery. They come in crowds, "pacing straight for the water, and seemingly bound for a dive." And "They must get just as nigh the water as they possibly can without falling in." This motif of confronting a mystery implies a consequent motif: that of self-destruction. For one may come too close to the fascinating object, the water—may take a dive or fall in. This implication becomes explicit in the climactic analogy of the series: "Surely all this is not without meaning. And still deeper the meaning of that story of Narcissus, who because he could not grasp the tormenting, mild image he saw in the fountain, plunged into it and was drowned." The water-gazing analogies coincide with the plot shape of *Moby-Dick:* Ahab with the crew of the *Pequod* thrusts off from land into the ocean, and in his effort to grasp a tormenting image, the White Whale, plunges in and is drowned. "But," says Ishmael, here in the first chapter commenting on the plunge of Narcissus, "that same image, we ourselves see in all rivers and oceans. It is the image of the ungraspable phantom of life; and this is the key to it all." This Narcissus analogy indeed is the "key" to a thematic argument of the book: something in man, now as throughout his history, forces him to confront the mystery of life, to pursue that phantom; but it is "ungraspable"; and the man who goes too far in the effort, who crowds too close upon the mystery, destroys himself. Such is Ahab's pursuit of Moby Dick, and such is his fate.

Ishmael, likewise, feels the attraction of the phantom. In the final words of this chapter he declares that "one grand hooded phantom, like a snow hill in the air" swayed him to his purpose of embarking on the whaling voyage. Similarly, the Spirit Spout is later a "phantom" luring the *Pequod* and her crew on and on (Ch. 51). After Ahab had revealed his purpose on this voyage, Ishmael realized, at least dimly, what the end must be. His shouts, he says, went up with the rest. "A wild, mystical, sympathetical feeling was in me; Ahab's quenchless feud seemed mine." But Ishmael "while yet all arush to encounter the whale, could see naught in that brute but the deadliest ill" (Ch. 41). And again Ishmael comments, "But in pursuit of those far mysteries we dream of, or in tormented chase of that demon phantom that, some time or other, swims before all human hearts; while chasing such over this round globe, they either lead us on in barren mazes or midway leave us whelmed" (Ch. 52).

Later Ahab shows repeatedly that he too realizes what Ishmael indicates from the beginning; that the issue of such an aggressive quest can only be self-destruction. For a single example, when Captain Boomer, who has lost an arm to Moby Dick, warns Ahab that "He's best let alone; don't you think so, Captain?" Ahab replies, "He is. But he will still be hunted, for all that. What is best let alone, that accursed thing is not always what least allures. He's all a magnet!" (Ch. 100).

Yet this first chapter makes a decisive point about Ishmael. Despite the magnetic attraction he feels towards the mystery which lures one on to destruction, he is still not by nature disposed, like Ahab, to press up so close to it as to plunge in and drown. This difference, a decisive one, between Ishmael's nature and Ahab's is manifested in several ways in the first chapter. For one thing, it is evident in Ishmael's second reason for going to sea at

all, since the voyage was—as his voyages still are—his conscious substitute for aggressive action, for expressing his frustrations destructively on others or himself, either by "deliberately stepping into the street, and methodically knocking people's hats off" or by following funerals (to the graveyard) or stabbing or shooting himself. To him, going to sea is not in itself aggressive; it is rather his "substitute for pistol and ball." Even at the outset, Ishmael half-consciously recognizes death may be the ultimate goal of his journey. Omens, icons, and monuments of death attend his progress on this voyage, as they do Ahab's, and cannot swerve him from his purpose to take ship.

III

The second question Ishmael raises is why he goes to sea as a common sailor. Although, unlike his first and third questions, this question presents no problem to Ishmael, his treatment of it leads again to definition of the same distinction between himself and Ahab. In this second section of the chapter (paragraphs 7–11) the difference comes out more fully, but so does an essential similarity. Ishmael feels as strongly as does Ahab a sense of personal dignity, heightened by pride, and he too is galled by the weight of indignities which superiors impose upon his body, mind, and spirit. But from the beginning, where he tells of his custom of going to sea as a "simple sailor" rather than as an officer, he announces his habitual acceptance of subordinate positions, indeed (as if he had a choice) his settled preference for them. At the same time, he displays his feeling that this subjection is one he shares with men in general, that his lot merges with the common lot of men, all of whom, he says, are slaves or victims in one way or another and should therefore help each other endure their common lot. Ahab's parallel perception of humanity's general suffering gives him no comfort and only exacerbates his sense of outrage.

The section is couched in motifs that are recurrent in *Moby-Dick*, of which the leading and dominant one is that of the inferior-superior relationship, involving the acceptance or rejection of imposed authority. Associated motifs include money; food; bodily impairment or injury; injustice or insult; antiquity; masonry and massive objects; personal dignity; and family. All are constituents of the image cluster I referred to earlier as recurring throughout Melville's works.

When Ishmael goes to sea, he explains, he never goes as a passenger, because to do so requires a purse. Nor does he go as an officer, for he abominates all honorable, respectable posts and responsibilities and will not identify himself with them. First, the motif of money which comes in the second sentence of the chapter ("having little or no money in my purse") appears again: "you must needs have a purse, and a purse is but a rag unless you have something in it"; then the money motif is dropped until it recurs at the end of the section in the image of "paying" (paragraph 10).

Next (still in paragraph 7) the motif of food develops, in the image of Ishmael's rejecting the possibility of shipping as cook. Though a cook is "a sort of officer on ship-board," with "considerable glory," Ishmael explains that "I never fancied broiling fowls;—though once broiled, judiciously buttered, and judgmatically salted and peppered, there is no one who will speak more respectfully, not to say reverentially, of a broiled fowl than I will." Here motifs of food, authority, and bodily impairment are linked as

they often are in the book. In his joshing way, Ishmael seems merely to be saying he has never cared to cook fowls, though once they are properly cooked and seasoned he has a very good appetite for them. The motifs he employs, however, carry in undercurrent the more generalized theme that he does not take pleasure as superiors (here reductively made comic as "cooks") do, from subjecting the bodies of inferiors ("fowls") to radical physical impairment ("broiling")—though once the bodies so treated have by such official and legal process ("judiciously," "judgmatically") been dignified and transformed, he is respectful, almost reverential toward them, in a way inverting superior and inferior. In short, he does not care to be a superior to inflict the physical hurt, but once it has been, as it were, legally and duly done he accepts and respects the result. He is as willing as anyone to "swallow" and "stomach" it. In a jocose second sentence, Ishmael quickly recapitulates the same motifs: food (victimized bodies eaten), authority, reverence—but twines them now with two further motifs, of antiquity and of massive masonry, in a single compressed image: "It is out of the idolatrous dotings of the old Egyptians upon broiled ibis and roasted river horse, that you see the mummies of those creatures in their huge bake-houses the pyramids." The general effect of this analogy, as of those in the earlier paragraphs, is to universalize the personal attitude Ishmael has just stated by associating it with a parallel instance in antiquity, one which (in "mummies" and "pyramids") has preserved and monumentalized the situation through the ages.

The arc of feeling traversed in the two sentences about cooking and eating fowl becomes thematically characteristic in *Moby-Dick*. Ishmael repeatedly moves from opposing ("I abominate . . .") a physically threatening person, object, or situation that is somehow "superior," to reconciling himself with it ("no one will speak more respectfully . . ."). And the particular motifs that carry the theme restate it repeatedly in the book. The motifs of food and eating are often linked to the motif of a superior in situations which are treated in a humorous tone, and sometimes the superior is embodied as a comic figure in authority, or has an attendant comic figure. Such a situation occurs in the next chapters when Ishmael confronts the cannibal Queequeg (who might eat him!) and ends up smoking and eating with him and even "married" to him. Another occurs when Ishmael and Queequeg eat their chowders under the dominating eye of shrewish Mrs. Hussey, who is scolding a man as the eating scene begins and who takes away Queequeg's harpoon as it ends (Ch. 15). Another is the scene in which the mates silently eat at table with the domineering Ahab, to be followed by the savage harpooneers attended by comic Dough-Boy (Ch. 34). And still another, the most fully developed, is that in which Stubb masticates his whale steak (cooked too much for his taste) while humorously baiting Old Fleece the comic black cook into delivering a sermon to a congregation of sharks who are also devouring a whale's body (Ch. 64. Cf. also Ch. 65 on "The Whale as a Dish").

Now very likely the reading I have just given seems somewhat farfetched, particularly in its generalizing the specific imagery of broiling, salting, and peppering a fowl into a motif designated as "bodily impairment." And it would really be only a facile translation if that motif did not become a central theme in *Moby-Dick*. In Ishmael's outer and inner worlds, of whaling and of consciousness, a major theme is that living bodies,

animal and human, are subjected to physical outrage, to all the possible range of injury, maiming, mangling, destruction—to the "horrible vulturism of earth." Victimizers act upon victimized bodies, superiors upon inferiors. The central instance is Ahab's dismemberment when his leg is reaped away by the White Whale's jaw; and the sustained context is the whaling world, in which bodies of men and animals are given to mutual injury and destruction in the normal course of existence, in the whole routine of chase, slaughter, and dismemberment—the hunter's and butcher's bloody work that is the whaleman's life and may be his death when the persecuted whale retaliates on his body.[1] In this destructive bodily collision of whaleman and whale the relationship of superior-inferior shifts, from one passage to another, in ways that depend as much on Ishmael's perspective and mood as on any facts of the immediate instance. He recognizes this world's general condition of mutual bodily victimization and identifies at different times either with superior or inferior, with biter or bitten. And often, as in the sentences just examined, his initial sympathy with the inferior, whose body is victimized, shifts, and he accepts the superior's victim as now transmuted into "food." The generalized motif of such a shift in feeling can be termed reconciliation.

Despite such strategies of reconciliation with the superior, however, Ishmael is habitually and characteristically on the side of the inferior. He feels victimized and his feeling of being put upon is carried by constant bodily images in the flow of his narration. He is unusually conscious of his own body, and in the course of the first chapter he names many of his bodily parts, functions, sensations, positions, and actions. Often he expresses his feelings in images of bodily discomfort or malfunction: "driving off the spleen, and regulating the circulation," "growing grim about the mouth," "a damp, drizzly November in my soul," "hazy about the eyes," "over conscious of my lungs"—these occur with some frequency.

Ishmael's signing on as a simple sailor, he admits, entails subjection to authority and an affront to his self-respect and family pride as well as the relinquishment of his own superior authority as a schoolmaster. "True, they rather order me about some. . . . And at first, this sort of thing is unpleasant enough. It touches one's sense of honor, particularly if you come of an old established family in the land. . . . And more than all, if just previous to putting your hand into the tar-pot, you have been lording it as a country schoolmaster, making the tallest boys stand in awe of you." Evidently Ishmael's sensitivity is rubbed raw on precisely the same point as Ahab's. Both resent the indignity of being ordered about, of being thumped and punched by superiors, particularly because each feels the pride of distinguished lineage and is accustomed to order tall fellows about and make them stand in awe. Ahab's sensitivity is exposed to the metaphysical thumping and punching of the gods, and the distinguished lineage he feels is not literal but the metaphysical dignity of the race of man, human dignity. Unlike Ahab, however, Ishmael has nonaggressive strategies for alleviating such indignities. Here, his first strategy is recourse to the folk wisdom of "grin and bear it," fortified by the book wisdom of Stoic philosophy; the transition from schoolmaster to sailor is a keen one requiring

1. Robert Lowell, in "The Quaker Graveyard in Nantucket," restated this theme accurately and magnificently. [Hayford's note.]

"a strong decoction of Seneca and the Stoics to enable you to grin and bear it." Furthermore, patience helps; for even this feeling of indignity "wears off in time."

Another jocular gambit of alleviation takes up the next paragraph (paragraph 9). Suppose some "old hunks of a sea-captain" does order Ishmael to sweep the decks (an indignity to an able seaman since this broom business is the prescriptive province of the boys, as we learn in Chapter 54)—what does this indignity amount to, weighed in the scales of the New Testament? Or does Ishmael's prompt obedience make the archangel Gabriel think less of him? And finally,

> Who aint a slave? Tell me that. Well, then, however the old sea-captains may order me about—however they may thump and punch me about, I have the satisfaction of knowing that it is all right; that everybody else is one way or other served in much the same way—either in a physical or metaphysical point of view, that is; and so the universal thump is passed round, and all hands should rub each other's shoulder-blades and be content.

In both the physical and metaphysical points of view, this recognition of universal slavery, this "thump," enrages Ahab past endurance and impels his physical attack upon the whale and his metaphysical attack upon whatever powers may stand behind the whale. But from the first, although Ishmael is as sensitive as Ahab to the indignity of physical subordination, he declares strategies, if not principles, of nonaggression: Stoic endurance, New Testament and democratic equality in suffering and slavery, fellow-feeling and mutual help—such are his remedies. Only too late does Ahab catch a glimpse through Pip, of something resembling Ishmael's insight into the emollient effect of shared suffering, of mankind full of sweet things of love and gratitude.

Another of Ishmael's remedies, evident from the first paragraph and one which in the end may be the most important of all, is the saving practicality of his humor. From the beginning the tone of his voice has been varied and flexible. Its serious flow yields to rifts of humor which usually break the tension just when the topic has become most serious and its tone most magniloquent. In the first paragraph a swelling exaggeration of language and structure creates a suspicion that ultimately he will not take altogether solemnly his own feelings and motives which are real enough but overdramatized: "Whenever . . . ; whenever . . . ; whenever . . . ; and especially whenever . . . ; then. . . ." The suspicion is at once confirmed by the next sentence where the irreverent wording of the qualifying alliterative phrase "With a philosophical flourish" reduces Cato's classical suicide to mock heroism in contrast to Ishmael's own underplayed sensible substitute, "I quietly take to the ship." In this middle section of the chapter, directly after the peroration of the first section (the series of analogies ending with the high-keyed climactic image of Narcissus which is "the key to it all"), his tone relaxes into jocularity all through the four and a half paragraphs (7–11) just discussed. As Ishmael discourses, his fluid consciousness is marked by varying tones and never settles into the monotone of a single attitude. His range does not reach the heights or the depths of Ahab's noble monomania, though it at times approaches them; he is brought back to a habitable mid-region by his humorous sense of his own

practical situation, which allows him to take "a strong decoction of Seneca and the Stoics" to help him "grin and bear it." This practical humorousness is a saving quality Ishmael shares with Stubb, the second mate, a quality that distinguishes them both from Ahab in the high seriousness of his tragic nobility.

By these strategies of attitude and tone, then, the tension of the chapter's middle section is relaxed and resolved. But in diminuendo Ishmael goes on to advance two further reasons for shipping as a sailor rather than as a passenger or officer. Both of these involve the motif of inferior-superior. In each of them he now argues in consciously sophistical rhetoric that the inferior is really the superior. His tone is jocular, but, as often, its jocularity barely veils his underlying hostility to anybody in a position of social and economic superiority. Passengers, as financially superior to sailors, are dealt with in the linked motifs of money-injustice. For passengers, so his resumed argument runs, must pay when they go to sea, whereas sailors are paid—and paying is the most uncomfortable infliction the two orchard-thieves, Adam and Eve, entailed upon their descendants. "But *being paid,*—what will compare with it?" Even here, however, Ishmael turns the thought against those above him: momentarily it is he, a poor sailor, not they, enjoying the felicity of being paid. But—so his thought runs on—to receive much pay leads to wealth, and wealth leads to destruction, for money is "the root of all earthly ills," and "on no account can a monied man enter heaven." And he moralizes, "How cheerfully we consign ourselves to perdition!"

In this last line of thought two motifs are twined: that of money (coupled with injustice) and that of self-destruction, in the image of consigning ourselves to perdition. The first paired motif, that of money-injustice, comes in for fuller development in the following chapter in Ishmael's lack of money for a night's lodging and in the passage about Lazarus and Dives. The second, that of self-destruction in the image of damnation or going-to-hell, first appears as such here but will often recur. For the whole voyage of the *Pequod* is, in fact, Ahab's willful self-consignment to perdition. Of this fact we are reminded throughout the book, both directly and indirectly, even to the final scene where the ship "sinks to hell."

Ishmael's last reason for shipping as a common sailor rather than in any position of honor is a humorously specious one that again develops the inferior-superior motif, reversing the positions. His reason is that the Commodore on the quarter-deck aft gets the air he breathes only at second hand from the forecastle sailors. The schoolmaster's learnedly indecorous joke, turning on the Pythagorean maxim to avoid eating beans, covertly vents contempt on the officers. "In much the same way do the commonalty lead their leaders in many other things, at the same time that the leaders little suspect it." At the end of the section, thus, analogizing from the sailors' station forward on the ship (of state) as she sails, Ishmael transforms the sailor-followers into "leaders" and the officer-leaders aft into "followers"—so the last shall be first and the first, last.

IV

At this point in the chapter (in the middle of paragraph 11), Ishmael by the foregoing strategies has handled two of the three questions into which

he divides the problem of his going to sea. Now he takes up his final question: why did he go that voyage on a whale-ship? Why, having repeatedly smelt the sea as a merchant sailor did he then go on a whaling voyage? (Note that this is the only one of the three questions that refers solely to the *Pequod*'s voyage, not to the motivations for Ishmael's voyages in general.) With this question, too, Ishmael deals in the recurrent motifs. He posits his motivation as a mystery. The dominant motif is that of the supernatural, while linked to it is that of injustice (or wrong) in the form of mystery-deception, or mystery-concealment. As Ahab characteristically does, Ishmael generalizes this particular question back into the problem of the universe—what he later calls "the universal problem of all things" (Ch. 64).

Why he took it into his head to go this time on a whaling voyage is a puzzle to Ishmael, one which is answerable only as part of the cosmic mystery, and which he deals with in a series of linked images. In the first witty image, Ishmael declares semi-seriously that he is secretly dogged and unaccountably influenced by an "invisible police-officer of the Fates," who can better answer than anyone else. His going whaling was doubtless his fate, or his predestined lot—in a second image "part of the grand programme of Providence that was drawn up a long time ago." For himself, he cannot tell (continuing the second image and showing some of his customary irreverence for high authorities over him) why it was that "those stage managers, the Fates," put him down for "this shabby part of a whaling voyage" when they assigned to others "magnificent parts in high tragedies" and to still others parts in comedies and farces. Here there lurks some irony on Ishmael's part, for on this whaling voyage high tragedy is indeed to be enacted (as well as comedy and farce), though the tragic role in it is to be Ahab's, not Ishmael's. But Ahab is a transfigured, transvaluated, common old whaleman exalted to the heights in a "democratic" tragedy. And Ahab, too, is convinced, as he cries to Starbuck, that his role was determined by the Fates: "This whole act's immutably decreed.—'Twas rehearsed by thee and me a billion years before this ocean rolled. . . . I am the Fates' lieutenant; I act under orders" (Ch. 134). Whatever motives of their own the Fates may have had in assigning Ishmael his part (Ishmael refrains from exploring that byway!), they cunningly presented to him, under various disguises, certain illusory motives as his own, into which he thinks he can now see a little way. Some of these motives, as he now recalls them in images of characteristic connotation, were: the curiosity "roused" in him by the "portentous and mysterious" monster, "the overwhelming idea of the great whale himself"; the "undeliverable, nameless perils" and "attending marvels" of the whale; the "torment" of his own "everlasting itch for things remote." These images associate the coming voyage with the motif of confrontation—the numinous fascination of the mysterious, here, as often, embodied in the massive and associated with the perilous (the danger of destruction from approaching it too close). Ishmael, like Ahab, like all men in their degree, feels this attraction. He feels, too, its frequently associated quality of forbiddenness. Paradoxically, to move toward the region where all these qualities coalesce is to respond actively to an attraction which is at the same time forbidden; he says (in active verbs), "I love to sail forbidden seas and land on barbarous coasts." But unlike Ahab, Ishmael by his characteristic strategy again dissolves

into sociality the aggressive, implied motive of invasion. To his sociality of feeling the barbarous horrors themselves will turn out to be just fellow "inmates" of this prison world: "Not ignoring what is good, I am quick to perceive a horror, and could still be social with it—would they let me—since it is but well to be on friendly terms with all the inmates of the place one lodges in."

So far as Ishmael can see into his motives when he confronts them as a problem, the foregoing were his reasons. "By reason of these things, then, the whaling voyage was welcome." But there is a still lower layer—for he realizes that these felt motives only "cajoled" him into "the delusion that it was a choice resulting from my own unbiased freewill and discriminating judgment." The climactic and final image of the chapter reasserts Ishmael's conviction that his motives were somehow imposed upon him as a passive receiver: "The great floodgates of the wonder-world swung open, and in the wild conceits that swayed me to my purpose, two and two there floated into my inmost soul, endless processions of the whale, and, midmost of them all, one grand hooded phantom, like a snow hill in the air." By the syntax of this sentence Ishmael becomes the passive recipient of conceits that "float" into his "inmost soul" from some exterior source; he is "swayed" by them rather than being their active originator. This image of something "floating" into the mind is one more metaphor (perhaps for an experiential sensation, perhaps for a metaphysical concept) to explain the same process Ishmael alluded to above in the theatrical image as a cleverly deceitful casting operation of the stage-managing Fates: "the springs and motives which being cunningly presented to me under various disguises, induced me to set about performing the part I did."

Here, indeed, the imagery brings up one of the major themes of *Moby-Dick*. In most general terms the theme may be defined as the problem of free will, of responsibility for one's actions. Already in this chapter the theme has been broached in three different metaphors, or concepts. First it was introduced as discussed above, under the image of "magnetic virtue," the attraction of water. Then it appeared under the loosely equivalent image or concept of "the Fates" and "Providence," with supplementary allusion to an "invisible police-officer of the Fates," who is evidently a sort of special daemon or supervisory angel put into modern dress and so comically demeaned as a petty official who "dogs" one. Finally, it is restated here in terms of the sensation of a psychological process, of something "floating" into the consciousness from outside—a metaphor evidently derived from a conceptual system of "atmospheric influences" frequently invoked elsewhere in *Moby-Dick* (and at great length in *Pierre*, where the etiology of motivation is examined with great intensity). Of all three images—magnetic influences, Fates or Providence, and "atmospheric influences"—the common denominator is their postulation of exterior forces determining the action of the mind. The mind is essentially their passive instrument, and its subjective sense of "a choice resulting" from "unbiased freewill and discriminating judgment" is only a "delusion" cunningly contrived and made pleasant by invisible superior powers.

The syntax of many sentences in the chapter supports the tenor of these metaphors in the motif of active-passive, and it here bears out Ishmael's explicit declaration that he has no free will. Many passive verb constructions and dissociations of self occur. In the opening paragraph, for

example, a kind of struggle goes on in Ishmael between what he feels happening independently in him ("I find myself growing grim about the mouth"; "it is a damp, drizzly November in my soul"; "I find myself involuntarily pausing"; "hypos get such an upper hand of me") and his assertive will opposing it ("a way I have of driving off the spleen"; "it requires a strong moral principle to prevent me"). In this sentence, the syntactical structure declares the control of Ishmael's active will in the struggle, for that assertion is placed in the main clause; but the declaration is only that he must get away to sea "as soon as I can," and "quietly take to the ship." The forces are still working upon him, even in his supposition that he "close" this evasion of the aggression and suicide towards which they are driving him; for in passively ("quietly") taking to ship, as in welcoming the whaling voyage, he is actually shipping on Ahab's aggressive mission, which leaves him in "abandonment" at the end (in the last words of his epilogue), "another orphan."

V

This discussion of "Loomings" has, I hope, illustrated what I called at its beginning the dense imaginative coherence of *Moby-Dick*, the close weaving of yarns in the figures of its fabric. I suppose readers have been at least as uneasily aware all along as I have of the limitations of some of my strategical assumptions, and especially do I sense the artificiality of my main working assumption that everything in the book is coming to us from its narrator Ishmael. When one should ascribe such elements as imagery, syntax, rhetoric, and their implications for thought and character in *Moby-Dick* to the fictional narrator Ishmael and when to his creator Melville is, I suspect, perhaps more a matter of critical strategy and relevance than of inherent propriety. If readers have noticed points in the discussion where taking such linguistic elements to characterize Ishmael seems unusually arbitrary, such points may indicate where it might have been better to assign them to Melville instead. Ultimately, this must somehow be done if sense is to be made of such recurrent images, motifs, and themes as I have been most concerned with displaying, especially since those which figure centrally in "Loomings" and the rest of *Moby-Dick*, where Ishmael is narrator, also permeate the whole of Melville's work from *Typee* to *Billy Budd*, where of course he is not. The total imaginative coherence of these works must have as its ground the mind of Melville, as author of them all.

Moby-Dick in the Twenty-First Century

GREIL MARCUS

[A Single Phrase Can Bring a Hundred Pages Back][†]

In every way, to read *Moby-Dick* is to reread it. Given the diffusion and the presence of the book and its metaphors, any time one sits down with the book, even if it is for the first time, the act carries with it a sense of return. One can forget so much of what is there, with hardly a phrase needed to bring a hundred pages back to mind in an instant. There is the way the whole first section of the book, until the *Pequod* sets sail, is a nonstop comedy, Ishmael first as Bob Hope in *Road to Utopia*, then as Abbott running an outrageous who's-on-first routine with his New Bedford innkeeper Costello, then Ishmael's one-night stand with the tattooed Polynesian harpooner Queequeg turning into at least a two-night marriage—but not before proving, in a set of syllogisms so precise you don't even care where they're leading, that it is a Christian's duty to worship a pagan idol. There is the language, sometimes stopping the book cold in its own pages ("He looked like a man cut away from a stake." Ishmael says of Ahab when he first sees him, and what Appalachian murder ballad was that line from, or waiting for?), often so free-swinging its slang leaps more than a century without slipping a minute into obsolescence: "Give it up, sub-subs!" "Who ain't a slave? Tell me that," "Cool as an icicle." There is the thrill of keeping up with a writer who moves so fast that you pull up short to catch your breath and wonder: how does he get from a deckhand knocked around by an overlord to the "universal thump" of democratic comradeship ("all hands should rub each other's shoulder-blades") in a paragraph? The rhetoric and the ethos of Jacksonian democracy, often taken to Olympian heights, make the wind behind so many of Ishmael's musings, but still—how does Melville move Ishmael from his ardor over Ahab casting thunderbolts on the quarterdeck to an analysis of the captain and his mates that could pass for an editorial in the *Democratic Review* on the flaws of Millard Fillmore's cabinet specifically and the state of the nation generally? "Here, then," our tour guide tells us, "was this grey-headed, ungodly old man, chasing with curses a Job's whale round the world, at the head of a crew, too, chiefly made up of mongrel

† From '"Give it up, sub-subs!': *Moby-Dick; or, The Whale*," in *A New Literary History of America*, ed. Greil Marcus and Werner Sollors (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2009), pp. 286–87. Copyright © 2009 by the President and Fellows of Harvard College. Reprinted by permission of the publisher.

renegades, and castaways, and cannibals—morally enfeebled also, by the incompetence of mere unaided virtue or right-mindedness in Starbuck, the invulnerable jollity of indifference and recklessness in Stubb, and the pervading mediocrity in Flask."

Even without rereading the book, even with only a *TV Guide* sense of the tale, one is rereading the book when one chances on John Wayne's Tom Dunson in *Red River* on late-night TV, a movie made in 1948; or recalls Elvis Presley two decades later, facing an audience for the first time in years and against the blankness of that unknown hoisting a mike stand like a harpoon, thrusting it over the crowd, and shouting "Moby Dick!"; or watches a black boy, one "Woody," an early incarnation of Bob Dylan, pitched out of a boxcar by hobo thugs and into a river, only to see a right whale gliding toward him in the 2007 film *I'm Not There;* or channel-switches into the 2008 episode of *Law & Order: Criminal Intent* where the tormented police detective Bobby Goren comes face to face with the unmistakable handiwork of the escaped serial killer Nicole Wallace, once a literature professor whose specialty was Melville. She lectures in a flashback: "The descent into madness is usually preceded by obsession. What characterizes Ahab's obsession? I always fancied it was man's unrelenting pursuit of his own potency." "I'm told she's your white whale," Goren's boss says to him—just before Goren receives a card postmarked Pittsfield, Massachusetts. When, early on in the book, Captain Peleg asks Ishmael, "Want to see what whaling is, eh? Have ye yet clapped eye on Captain Ahab?" and Ishmael answers, "Who is Captain Ahab, sir?" we're surprised he hasn't heard of him; we have.

Did Melville somehow know, or hope, that his country would always seek out the mysteries that, in his big book, the book that would for the rest of his life erase his name from the memories of his fellow citizens, he took down as if they were the plainest, most obvious facts, himself the sub-sub librarian he so confidently laughed off? That famous letter from Hawthorne, the letter in which he showed Melville that he "understood the book," the letter that, unlike Melville's response to Hawthorne, does not survive—it could have been one of Poe's hoaxes, were he still around to forge it, a trick to keep the characters alive, running their histories through history yet unmade, unmaking history as they left it behind and continued on their way.

What *did* Hawthorne say? No, Melville may not have kept letters, as Hawthorne did, but one can imagine a ceremony a little more to the point than taking out the trash. "Cool as an icicle," as Ishmael says of Queequeg sitting among the other sailors in the Spouter-Inn, his harpoon at hand, "reaching over the table with it, to the imminent jeopardy of many heads, and grappling the beefsteaks towards him. But *that* was certainly very coolly done by him, and every one knows that in most people's estimation, to do anything coolly is to do it genteelly." So how cool, how genteel of you, Herman, sitting in your writing room late at night, with no one to glimpse a single word as you burned the pages! There was no better way to keep us reading; with its author more than a century dead, the book is the sea we swim in.

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TIMOTHY MARR

Kraken: *Moby-Dick* in Popular Culture†

Moby-Dick's reputation has proven to be as "ubiquitous" and "immortal" as the rumors of the white whale for which it is named. Chapter 57 features Ishmael seeking out appearances of whales on signs, scrimshaw, door knockers, weathervanes, and tracing them in relief on ridges and geological forms—much as Melville did with his own view outside his window of distant snow-covered Mount Greylock lying on the landscape like a whale while he was writing *Moby-Dick* at Arrowhead, his home in Pittsfield, Massachusetts. Sightings since have become so universal that "endless processions" of the work and its whale have risen out of the text and emerged as a conspicuous global icon of popular culture. "In every way, to read *Moby-Dick* is to reread it," writes cultural critic Greil Marcus; "Given the diffusion and the presence of the book and its metaphors, any time one sits down with the book, even if it is for the first time, the act carries with it a sense of return." He concludes, "With its author more than a century dead, the book is the sea we swim in" (286–87).

The widening ripples of that popular splash registered after World War I when the rediscovery of *Moby-Dick* provided a cultural basis for the expansion of American global power. Many popular publishers, freed from copyright, reissued the book through the 1920s in New York, Boston, and London. Modern advances in technology enabled the propagation of powerful visual imagery, including elaborate illustrations, such the 280 iconic ink drawings by Rockwell Kent, as well as the blockbuster 1926 Warner Brothers silent film *The Sea Beast*. By the end of the decade the book had already been translated into such languages as French, German, Dutch, Polish, and Finnish, inaugurating a continuing wake of the Whale through the multilingual waters of the wonder-world.

In the century since, observant readers undertaking an Ishmaelian quest can discover many marvelous ways that Melville, his book, and his whale have jetted and breached across the oceans of planetary popular expression. The White Whale has become a type of Rorschach test—a "blankness, full of meaning" onto which many have projected their interpretive harpoons. The oil squeezed from the scholarly trying out of Melville's book has illuminated many a thesis and article. Ahab's monomanical pursuit of Moby Dick has become an emblematic shorthand for any obsessive pursuit that is destructively all-consuming. M. Thomas Inge, the pioneer of Melville popular cultural studies, has long noted how *Moby-Dick* exerts "a pervasive influence in all aspects of our collective cultural memory" in

† Written for this Norton Critical Edition.

ways that produce "a striking vitality that has taken on a life of its own" (Inge [2009] 3, [1986] 696).

One of the most influential media for popular adaptations of *Moby-Dick* is the feature film, an expressive form that flourished at the same time as the Melville Revival in the 1920s. Many of the most creative departures from Melville's text were popularized by attempts to portray Ahab's whale tale on the screen. The actor John Barrymore played Ahab in the *Sea Beast* and its 1930 reissue as a talkie under the title *Moby Dick*. Barrymore's Ahab was a romantic hero who survives the story, successfully competing for the love of the daughter of a minister against his evil brother who pushed him into the path of Moby Dick who then dismembered him. One of the lasting effects of these two films, in which no Ishmael appears, is the impetus they afforded to the development of women's perspectives on *Moby-Dick*, and thus opening an aperture on a female vision through the whale's opposing eye. Ahab's wife receives sparse mention in Melville's novel, where the unnamed "girl-wife" is described as "young," "sweet, " and "resigned"; indeed, Ahab departs on one of his journeys around Cape Horn the day after their wedding. Ellen Driscoll fills in occluded women's perspectives in her multimedia dance *Ahab's Wife, or the Whale* (1998) featuring shadow puppets within a translucent hoop skirt. Sara Jeter Naslund's bestselling novel from 1999 *Ahab's Wife, or the Star-Gazer* names her Una Spenser and places her experience on land at the center of an epic counternarrative. In a 2011 television mini-series, Ahab's wife (Elizabeth) is played by Gillian Anderson, who begs the captain to settle and enjoy the fruits of his earlier success, all to no avail.

The most impactful visual rendition of the book is the 1956 Warner Brothers film directed by John Huston starring Gregory Peck as Ahab. Ray Bradbury, in writing the screenplay, not only reduced the 135 chapters to 54 plot events, but fundamentally revised the end of the story by raising Ahab out of the ocean bound by whale-lines to Moby Dick instead of Fedallah, his Asian harpooner-pilot. Ahab's flapping dead hand causes such consternation in the crew that "Ahab beckons" signalizes their own imminent demise, indenting a powerful image in popular consciousness not present in Melville's novel. More recent cinematic Ahabs, who fight Moby Dicks whose girth and power have been amplified through special effects, include Jack Aranson (1978), Patrick Stewart (1998), Frédéric Bonpart (2004), Barry Bostwick (2010), and William Hurt (2011), as well as variations that feature Charles Bronson pursuing a white buffalo (1977) and Danny Glover a white dragon (2011). *Moby-Dick* the book itself plays revealing cameos in the films *Zelig* (1983), *Heathers* (1989), *Fried Green Tomatoes* (1991), and *The Warrior* (2011) as well as being referenced and riffed upon in dozens of others.

Whalers in Melville's time were great adventurers and the voyages around Capes Horn and Good Hope in search of oceanic combat against whales were the longest journeys ever made by humans on earth. In the past fifty years, these profound expanses have been projected into outer space and Melville's story dramatically transposed into both the cosmos and the future. These expansions flow from the way that Melville's writings equate archipelagos of islands with constellations of stars. Ishmael aims to chase starry Cetus, and Queequeg views his coffin as a canoe in which he could sail "beyond all visible horizons" to "interflow with the heavens" which "form the white breakers of the milky way." Ray Bradbury

continued his spinning of *Moby-Dick* into space in his *Leviathan '99*, a radio-script, stage play, opera, and novel in which the whale is supplanted by a devouring white comet. Philip Jose Farmer's 1971 science fiction sequel *The Wind Whales of Ishmael* projects the hunt into a future where there are no oceans, whales soar, and the crew's nemesis is the tentacled Kahamwoodoo (the Purple Beast of the Stinging Death). In the 1982 full-length film, *Star Trek II: The Wrath of Khan*, the evil Khan borrows Ahab's words of revenge in his pursuit of Captain Kirk, and a copy of Melville's book can be seen in his room. Hakugei, a Japanese anime television series from the late 1990s situates the drama in 4699, when Ahab assaults an abandoned armed spaceship name Moby Dick (the White Devil). "Möbius Dick," a 2011 episode of the animated sitcom *Futurama*, featured the pursuit of a four-dimensional whale through the Bermuda Tetrahedon by cyclopean Captain Leela. Only Zoidberg survives to tell the tale. Even in scientific commentary, astronomers' attempts to locate a white dwarf supernova in the Pinwheel Galaxy, some 21 million light-years distant, has been likened to Ahab's furious feud (Preuss).

The more mundane American comic book originated in the 1930s and many readers, quailing before the bulk of the novel itself, have explored Melville's tale through this accessible form. *Moby-Dick* was one of the three most popular titles in the *Classic Comics* series that went through thirteen reprintings between 1942 and 1954 (Inge 711). Since then, first abetted by the 1956 film, dozens of graphic iterations of Melville's work have disseminated powerful images of and tellings to large audiences. These cultural adaptations and animations capitalize on the widening recognition of *Moby-Dick*, often with parody and satire, rather than expose any deeper understanding of Melville's art. Unlike Ahab's sinister whale, Moby Dick lives a reduced existence in animated cartoons where he often sports as an ally or protector of children. In Hanna Barbera's Moby Dick from the late 1960s, Tom and Tub are rescued by the white whale, while other cartoons feature Dopey Dick (Woody the Woodpecker), Dickey Moe (Tom and Jerry), and Moby Duck (Merrie Melodies). Though an ad for a late 1950s Moby Dick toy ("He Swims—He Spouts") claims "He's terrific," that terror is so domesticated to the bathtub that he resembles a fishing lure with no hook.

Richard Hardack explains that "Melville is simultaneously posited as our best-known and most obscure author," a paradox that leads to varied ways that "*Moby-Dick* can be 'played' in many keys, or is amenable to many arrangements" (p. 8–9). The book was musically rendered into a cantata by Bernhard Herrmann that premiered in Carnegie Hall in 1940 as well as into many operas (see Wallace [on pp. 698–99 herein]). *Moby-Dick* has also established a resonance on the "little lower layer" of popular recordings. Songs named Moby Dick have been composed and performed by such varied bands as Sodom and Glass Wave, as well as the famous Led Zeppelin instrumental featuring Jon Bonham's epic drum solo, itself covered by Skint, Vanilla Fudge, and the Cruel Sea. An Italian group from the early 1970s with a Led Zeppelin sound called themselves Moby Dick as did a Serbian pop-dance band and a Hungarian thrash metal band from the 1990s. For more metal Moby listen to "The Call of the Wretched Sea" (2006) by Ahab, a German funeral doom band, or "Leviathan" (2004) by Atlanta-based Mastodon, both *Moby-Dick* concept albums replete with white whale cover art. Two bands from the different popular genres who have taken their names from Melville's novel include a dance music duo

named Captain Ahab from Los Angeles and a country music band called Or, The Whale from San Francisco, where the psychedelic band Moby Grape was formed in 1966 taking its name from the punch line of "What's big and purple and lives in the ocean?" San Francisco later featured Moby Dick Records with its "Moby Dick Sound" (1981–84) and a chain of California music stores named Moby Disk, now the brand of new online incarnations in Spain and Denmark.

Ahab's retaliation against Moby Dick the white whale has become a cultural archetype for fanatical pursuits of all sorts that emerges frequently in political commentary and cartoons. It has been applied, for example, by Edmund Wilson to Ulysses S. Grant battling Robert E. Lee, by Norman Mailer to Joe Frazier's vendetta with Muhammad Ali, as well as to professors' attempts to locate the perpetrator of the white powder anthrax attacks (Pelzer). The obsessive quest for revenge against evil has refashioned the whale in many guises ranging from Hitler during WWII, Communism during of the Cold War, and Saddam Hussein, Osama bin Laden, and other antagonists in the war on terrorism, strangely prefigured by how Melville bills Ishmael's journey alongside the "Bloody Battle in Affghanistan." In recent years, the fruitless fury of partisan strife, exemplified by a succession of heated issues as taxation, health reform, and the war on poverty, has been registered through the literary frame of Melville's vengeance. Such commentary reveals the degree to which Ahab himself becomes the very evil that he seeks to destroy in the whale. The lesson of this equivalence between predator and prey dramatizes how any form of crusade or jihad can be prosecuted with such rage that the dedication enacts its own crime. This rhetoric was borne out in West Germany during the early 1970s when the radical Red Army Faction, known for its leader Baader Meinhof, fashioned their militant attack by linking the "State" with Thomas Hobbes' Leviathan and adopting code-names taken from the *Pequod*'s crew, making Meinhof into Ahab.

Even more minor characters from *Moby-Dick* have lived out whole careers of their own in the progressing realms of public life. The resonant name of Melville's tattooed Queequeg has circulated widely as a multiethnic sign of alien exoticism in ways that illustrate the extent of the novel's popular purchase. References range from a 1960s coffeehouse in Seattle to a trendy twenty-first-century Nantucket bistro, the adopted dog in the original television series *X-Files*, characters and a helicopter in video games, a brand of Spiced Rum, a song by the Evangenitals, a nonprofit foundation in Pittsburgh, and the name of many ships, including a catamaran destroyed in the Indian Ocean during an attempt to sail around the world.

The ludicrous degree to which *Moby-Dick* has saturated cultural landscapes can be glimpsed through a "higgledy-piggledy" assortment of material artefacts, each of which has taken on part of the mythos of Moby Dick. Project Moby Dick was a 1950s CIA mission, before the age of satellites, to launch enormous espionage balloons the size of twenty-storey buildings that would enter the jet stream and enable spying on sites in the Soviet Union. The Porsche 935 coupe car from 1978 raced under the name Moby Dick. The basketball stadium at Colorado State University is known as Moby Arena and the Eero Saarinen-designed hockey rink at Yale is called the Whale. Moby Dick is a species of milkweed (*Asclepias*) used in ornamental flower arrangements. If you travel to one of the peninsulas

of Antarctica, you could trudge through the literary universe of *Moby-Dick* in the midst of snowy landmarks such as Mt. Ahab, Ishmael Peak, and Tashtego Point among many more, including Pequod and Melville Glaciers. Every time people eat fish in a restaurant named for Moby Dick or hold a Starbucks cup in their hands they retain a link with the cultural vitality of Melville's novel. Starbucks began as another Seattle coffeehouse in 1971, and its founders settled on the name of the stalwart first mate after realizing that the first syllable of Pequod made that tag distasteful for the brand of a hot beverage.

Melville's "whale lines" have more substantially caught ahold of many other authors, including Ralph Ellison, Albert Camus, Jack Kerouac, Jorge Luis Borges, Ken Kesey, Cormac McCarthy, Maurice Sendak, Toni Morrison, and Marilynne Robinson. Recent writers in English who have composed revisionary takes of *Moby-Dick* after Peter Benchley's *Jaws* (1974) include Anne Finger's "Moby Dick, or, The Leg," from *Call Me Ahab* (2009), Sherry Robbins' poetry in *or, The Whale* (2010), John Minchillo's *The Snow Whale* (2011), and China Miéville's fantasy *RailSea* (2011) which features a giant white "moldywarpe" or burrowing mole named Mocker-Jack. Themes and motifs from *Moby-Dick* suffuse other literary imaginings, such as Chad Harbach's *The Art of Fielding* (2011), which imagines a professor's discovery of a lost speech that Melville supposedly gave in 1880 at a liberal arts college in Wisconsin, which leads the president to choose the Harpooners as the new mascot and erect a statue of Melville on shore of Lake Michigan.

The resounding renown of *Moby-Dick* in the age of the internet has fostered a changing fascination in recent years with what poet Hart Crane has called the "fabulous shadow" of Melville himself. Several writers inhabit imagined episodes in Melville's life by featuring him as an inscrutably restive character, effectively turning Ishmael back in to the author who invented him. Larry Duberstein's *The Handsome Sailor* (1998) and Frederick Busch's *The Night Inspector* (2000) feature the postbellum years when Melville's literary reputation waned as he worked in the New York Customs House. Busch's mysterious "M" asserts that "I am my darkest, best-held secret" and becomes involved in a plot to aid the escape of children still held in slavery in Florida. Duberstein's Melville, stuck in a restricted marriage with his wife Lizzie, gets revived through an affair with a widow named Cora, as Duberstein also claims he had with the real Sarah Morewood who confesses as much in a section she narrates in Pittsfield during the writing of *Moby-Dick*. That imagined episode is drawn out in Michael Selden's 2016 dramatic exposé *Melville in Love: The Secret Life of Herman Melville and the Muse of Moby-Dick* that posits the inspiring exultation he reaped from passionate adultery with his married neighbor. Lizzie is the narrator of every other chapter of Jay Parini's *The Passages of H.M.* (2011) and provides an intimately bitter perspective on Melville's stormy loneliness and pansexual yearnings. These new directions indicate how Melville the artist, similar to the fate of Jane Austen, has himself been appropriated alongside his works and characters as a generative muse authorizing fictional fecundity.

One of the most familiar and creative ways that *Moby-Dick* has inscribed itself upon its readers is by the number of tattoos it has inspired individuals to mark on their own skins. In Melville's time, sailors feared the "crunching teeth of sharks" and used their teeth to tattoo themselves

with crucifixes and other talismans to protect themselves from harm. The "twisted" "hieroglyphics" of Queequeg's tattooing inscrutably represent "a complete theory of the heavens and the earth, and a mystical treatise on the art of attaining truth" and Ishmael presents his body itself as "a blank page for a poem I was then composing." The intimate impressions of today's tattoos range from the discreet whale that can be retracted beneath the billows of a cuff to breachings and plungings of mammalian Moby Dick that extend down shoulders or up calves, traverse thighs or cover backs, in black, in color, and in white.

Upon completing *Moby-Dick*, Melville wrote to Nathaniel Hawthorne that "Leviathan is not the biggest fish;—I have heard of Krakens," referring to giant sea monsters from Nordic legends. This essay begins to intimate how Melville's Kraken has and is being written in the colossal circuits crisscrossed by his mythic Whale since Melville's death. As a student of *Moby-Dick* you can dive in yourself and weigh the wealth of Melville's words as well as track their continuing smack through the swell of successive waves of expressive and popular culture. Create your own artistic response from your own investigations, or dredge up a "dripping trophy" out of the tremendous tides streaming through the world wide web. "And what are you, reader, but a Loose-Fish and a Fast-Fish, too?" (Chapter 89)

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MARY K. BERCAW EDWARDS AND WYN KELLEY

Melville and the Spoken Word†

Since at least the mid-twentieth century and with ever-growing popularity in the twenty-first, Herman Melville's works have flourished in a dazzling variety of cultural forms. New film versions, cartoons, art in multiple

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media, sci-fi and anime spinoffs, literary and theatrical adaptations, all kinds of music recordings, as well as endless seafood restaurants, manifest the enduring power of Melville's texts, especially *Moby-Dick*. One particular form, namely oral or spoken-word performance, has drawn particular attention for extending the book beyond the enclosed precincts of private, academic, and elite reading spaces. The marathon readings of *Moby-Dick*, taking place in physical venues or online, celebrate a festive social experience of reading aloud that seems to us distinctive: first, because it speaks to the richness of Melville's language, showing his strong response to oral cultures that inspired his writing; second because it resonates with contemporary oral performance arts, like spoken-word poetry, rap, and hip hop, that have used innovative movement, sound, and visual display to challenge older styles of poetic recitation and pulpit oratory; and finally because the spoken word is one of the most democratic and inclusive aspects of both *Moby-Dick* and the oral, participatory culture that has grown up around the book.

In recent decades, *Moby-Dick* marathons have proliferated all over the world, gathering readers and fans in diverse locations. The longest-running marathon, held annually at Mystic Seaport in Mystic, Connecticut, celebrated its thirtieth year in 2015. Held aboard the 1841 whaleship *Charles W. Morgan*, built only seven months after and seven miles away from the *Acushnet* (on which Melville sailed in 1841), the Mystic Seaport marathon is timed to finish on Melville's birthday. The *Moby-Dick* Marathon at the New Bedford Whaling Museum (Dowling), occurring on a weekend close to January 3 (the date Melville set sail aboard the *Acushnet*) celebrated its twentieth year in 2016. New marathons continue to rise in such far-flung locations as Jerusalem, London, San Francisco, New York, Kansas, Kentucky, and Long Island.

Public *Moby-Dick* marathons draw a wide range of participants, all seemingly "bound for a dive" ("Loomings"), or at least an adventure that rivals the whaling voyage itself. The irrepressible "Gansevoort" and "Lemuel," writing at "Ahab Beckons," a blog devoted to the New Bedford Whaling Museum's *Moby-Dick* Marathon, suggest packing as if for an arduous expedition:

- A copy of *Moby-Dick*. Of course. . . .
- Warm, layered clothing, with a cap. The Museum is kept at a comfortable temperature, but one's metabolism ebbs in the wee hours.
- A pillow or pad to sit on. (Or bring your own folding chair.) The Museum's chairs are hard plastic. . . .
- Notepad and pen, if you're prone to epiphanies.
- Knitting/crochet gear. This is a popular pastime. . . .
- Mints or gum, out of consideration for your shipmates.

Reading *Moby-Dick* for twenty-four hours creates a community often as diverse as a whaling ship's crew and one that feels, especially during the long hours from midnight until 6:00 am, as isolated. Readers are bound together by their common goal but also by the breath, the inspiration, the spoken voice, that surrounds and infuses them. Daniel Herman, who began the San Francisco marathon in 2015, writes of the "by turns intense, hilarious, and altogether electrifying spectacle" of hearing *Moby-Dick* read aloud (Herman).

The marathon, then, often engenders a sense of wonder and surprise. One of the great joys at *Moby-Dick* marathons is to watch listeners laugh out loud, then look slightly abashed as if fearful that they are not supposed to chuckle at such a heralded tome. Another is to watch children quiet down and listen intently, oblivious to the fact that the language of the book is supposed to be far above them. And a third is to see the readers—"an *Anacharsis Clootz* deputation from all the isles of the sea, and all the ends of the earth" ("Knights and Squires")—who flock to participate: not only English teachers, graduate students, and Melville aficionados, as one would expect, but also youngsters, mechanics, hitch-hikers, rebels, reporters, artists, and many others. At one marathon, a young man sporting tattoos and piercings, with punkish, multi-colored hair standing on end, settled down, friends in tow. When asked if he might be lost or needed help, he replied, "Nah, I'm good. I heard they were reading *Moby-Dick* here; I love that book!" A harried-looking father next to him said that he was staying all night because his son, too, all of eight years old, loves *Moby-Dick*.

Amid such a range of readers, the sound of wildly various accents can be a moving reminder of the power of the human voice, raised alone or in chorus. Wherever it takes place, a literary marathon is a community event, bringing together diverse tongues. New Bedford, for example, the great nineteenth-century whaling city, now anchors a South Coastal region stretching from Pawtucket, Rhode Island, to Fall River and South Dartmouth, Massachusetts. It is a strongly Hispanophone and Lusophone world, with residents claiming descent from Azorean and Cape Verdean whalemen but also more recent arrivals from South and Central America and the Caribbean. The *Moby-Dick* Marathon in 2016 featured a reading of an abridged translation in Portuguese with some fifty participants. In the spirit of its twenty-first-century community as well as of global nineteenth-century whaling, the Museum also invites readers to deliver Melville's lines in Dutch, French, German, and Japanese, not to mention Hebrew and Mandarin. For many participants, the *Moby-Dick* Marathon may give them their first inkling that Melville's work offers a rich transnational tapestry of global cultures and voices ("20th Marathon").

As profound as the impact of many voices bringing Melville's text to noisy life is the shock of standing up to read by oneself. Even for seasoned bibliophiles who know the book deeply, the experience of public reading radically alters the text. Eyes blur over what was once a familiar page, blood races, and one hears a voice that seems to belong to someone else. Unsettling thoughts dart through the mind: Did Melville really write this paragraph? Why have I never heard it before? Does this Ahab speech call for a shout or a whisper? "Top gallant" or "t'gallant," "leeward" or "looard"? How did I just manage to drop a whole line? Whoa, this is *gorgeous*.

This defamiliarizing experience is a reminder, indeed, of the wonderful orality of *Moby-Dick* itself, heard not only in patently dramatic chapters such as "Midnight, Forecastle," but also in the boisterousness of "The Hyena," the sermon-like, exegetic quality of "The Line," the fierceness of Ahab's voice in "The Deck Toward the End of the First Night Watch," and the hilarity of such a chapter as "The Fossil Whale," which falls at roughly 2:00 am during a typical twenty-four-hour reading. Indeed Melville's early writing is rich in orality, from the first words of *Typee*—"Six months at sea! Yes, reader, as I live"—to "Call me Ishmael" in *Moby-Dick*. Melville

spent four years at sea in a largely oral world. By all surviving accounts, he was an astounding storyteller, and during his seafaring years he honed his skill as a spinner of yarns, keeping shipmates entertained in a world in which such oral sparring was highly valued (Bercaw Edwards; Olsen-Smith). As Melville states explicitly in the Preface to *Typee*: "the incidents recorded in the following pages have often served, when 'spun as a yarn,' not only to relieve the weariness of many a night-watch at sea, but to excite the warmest sympathies of the author's shipmates."

Yet Melville's readers have not always been aware of the sailors' impressive verbal skills. Often marginalized, nineteenth-century sailors have been portrayed as less intelligent, even less moral than educated classes on land. Many were illiterate, and even those who could read had little access to newspapers or other printed texts during their long passages from home. By the mid-nineteenth century, the average whaling voyage lasted between two and five years. Yet, in what might seem an impoverished shipboard world, sailors perpetuated a rich oral culture. They had to be multilingual in order to function effectively aboard technically and linguistically complex sailing vessels, within racially and ethnically diverse crews, and in interactions ashore with indigenous people, missionaries, and traders, all of whom had their own languages.

Melville's immersion in this oral world deeply affected his early writings. He drew on the variety of voices he had heard to engage and enchant an audience and to lend narrative gifts to his narrators. Ishmael, for example, is a virtuoso in a story-loving community. On board the *Pequod* he also encounters Ahab, whose overwhelming command of spoken language sways and compels all within its reach (although it is finally ineffectual in the face of existential human alienation from the universe). The trajectory from Tommo to Ishmael is mirrored in the developing subtlety in each narrator's voice. Essential to this development is the increasingly sophisticated and profound use of the oral sources and discourses that informed Melville's creative process.

It may come as a surprise that the opulent oral culture and spoken-word artistry of *Moby-Dick* could resonate as much with readers today as they did in Melville's time—perhaps even more. For just as *Moby-Dick* artfully blends the diverse voices of nineteenth-century sailors, African slaves, and urban laborers, Melville's work also speaks to a vigorous contemporary oral culture that includes hip hop, spoken-word poetry, and verbal performance art. Blogging in the *Atlantic,* Ta-Nehisi Coates writes appreciatively of the furious intensity of Melville's sentences, (which remind him of dramatic monologues voiced by slaves and freedom fighters in Robert Hayden's poem, "The Middle Passage"): "The commas, the semicolons, the stops and starts, the double negatives, the qualifiers [in Melville's writing] all add up to a kind of hedged chaos." Coates immediately thinks of rap music: "It puts me in mind of a great Bomb Squad track ('Louder Than A Bomb,' 'Rebel Without A Pause,' or 'Welcome To The Terrordome'). But in that chaos, in that lack of clear, explicit direction, I feel that I am in the mind of the whalers, I am as whirled about as they are."

Linking Melville with rap group Public Enemy points to the transgressive verbal exuberance of *Moby-Dick* but likewise suggests the physical, embodied nature of language that is spoken but also sung and danced. Coates concludes: "The sentences become physical. And yeah, pretty

farking awesome." Rudy "Rudacious" Cabrera, a Dominican-American spoken-word poet and actor in Providence, Rhode Island, responds to *Moby-Dick* in a similarly multimodal way. As an actor in Ricardo Pitts-Wiley's *Moby-Dick: Then and Now* (2007), an explosive adaptation that remixes Melville's words with contemporary street talk and plays off the whaling plot with a story of urban gangs and the international cocaine trade, Cabrera draws on the innovative vernacular and fluid movements of urban culture. Melville's environment of blood, harpoons, and lyrical beauty looks familiar to Rudy, a world of "bad leaders," of violence mingled with wonder in the face of a huge and terrifying "WhiteThing," so big that "compared to him we just Nemo" (National Writing Project). The urban crew members in *Moby-Dick: Then and Now* respond to the horror of WhiteThing with impassioned speeches but also with African step and stomp, chants and beats (Project New Media Literacies).

Cabrera's mentor Ricardo Pitts-Wiley, a Black actor, playwright, teacher, and community theater director, produced *Moby-Dick: Then and Now* in close collaboration with his young actors, listening to their voices and building the play around their intonations. As he says, "[sometimes] literature is dead language written by dead people." He sees the playwright's task as requiring him to "lift the language off the page and put an electrical charge into it, so that it burns with energy, it burns with immediacy." With language of such power, the actor delivers an effect that Pitts-Wiley sees as deeply ethical: "when you 'speak the speech, I pray you, trippingly on the tongue,' then you get a chance to be accountable for not only the idea but *how* you express it" (National Writing Project). Like Queequeg, whose tattooed body tells a story, Rudy and the youthful cast channel words physically, enriching a distinctive idiom through movement.

The *Moby-Dick* marathons draw attention to Melville's oral cultures and our own, but they also exemplify a lively spirit of participation and inclusion deeply compatible with the democratic energies of Melville's book. The presence of spoken-word art in and around *Moby-Dick* lends vitality to the text and resists the dominance of elite practices of reading and interpretation. The vigorous popularity of reading out loud suggests the power of what Henry Jenkins and others have called a participatory culture in classrooms, online, and in popular media forms (Jenkins and Kelley, *et al*. 2013; Jenkins, Ito, Boyd 2016). Reading marathons, like online fan sites, book clubs, and writing groups, signal a robust spirit that is changing the way twenty-first century readers encounter classic texts like *Moby-Dick*. In this environment, Melville's work is no longer the province of scholars and experts. It rings out in a chorus of voices like what Melville heard and responded to when he wrote the book.

The awareness of *Moby-Dick* as a global text being read in multi-vocal communities gets a further charge from the connectivity of the internet and its capacity for archiving live performance. Marathons such as the "Moby Dick [*sic*] Big Read," inaugurated in England in 2011, feature celebrities and pop stars among ordinary folk and can live on in classrooms, libraries, and reading groups. Images and clips from taped marathon readings survive long after the real-time event, capturing and preserving text and spectacle, word and many voices. Once one might have considered the spoken word as ephemeral as the air from which it is made. Online, however, it can last indefinitely.

Although reading aloud can make one aware of the voice as spoken instrument, Melville's poetry often recalls movingly the voices of lost sailors—and the loss of their voices. All that remains of the shipwrecked sailors in "The Aeolian Harp" is the imagined sound of their dying shrieks, rendered in the "plaintive key" of the harp: "O the sailors—O the sails! / O the lost crews never heard of! / Well the harp of Ariel wails / Thoughts that tongue can tell no word of!" (*Poems*). At moments, Melville's poetic voice seems consumed with grief over the silence of the universe. In "John Marr," that grief settles nostalgically on sounds heard no more: "A beat, a heart-beat musters all, / One heart-beat at heart-core. / It musters. But to clasp, retain; / To see you at the halyards main—/ To hear your chorus once again!"

In the delight of hearing Melville's words read today all over the world, and with the certainty that Melville would most likely appreciate such celebratory attention, we should not forget the pain associated with the human voice in many of his writings. That thoughtful if mournful timbre, however, underlying the beauty of his spoken words, may be Melville's lasting gift to our time.

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ROBERT K. WALLACE

Moby-Dick and the Arts in the Early Twenty-First Century†

The subject of *Moby-Dick* and the Arts began with Ishmael's response to the painting in the Spouter-Inn in Ch. 3, his probing exploration of its "chaos bewitched" seen by some critics, beginning in the twentieth century, as embodying the interpretive process by which Melville invites us to encounter the novel itself. Ishmael throughout the rest of the novel alludes to an extremely wide array of visual art: the pulpit painting in Ch. 8, Cellini's shield in Ch. 28, the Cologne Cathedral in Ch. 32, the world-wide array of "monstrous pictures of whales" in Ch. 55, the "less erroneous pictures" in Ch. 56, depictions of whales by the London beggar, scrimshaw artists, Polynesian artisans, and the heavens themselves in Ch. 57, allusions to Italian line engravings, Egyptian hieroglyphs, and Native American petroglyphs in Ch. 68, the skeleton of the whale as a revered tropical artifact in Ch. 102, and the tattoos on Queequeg's chest in Ch. 110, these delineating "a complete theory of the heavens and the earth . . . whose mysteries not even himself could read, though his own live heart beat against them."

Although there were no illustrated editions of *Moby-Dick* in Melville's lifetime, these began soon after his death with editions by A. Burnham Shute in 1896 and I. W. Taber in 1899. The twentieth century witnessed an exceptionally varied sequence of illustrated editions, from Rockwell Kent's three-volume Lakeside Press edition in 1930 to Bill Sienkiewicz's Classics Illustrated edition in 1990, all of which were expertly interpreted and illustrated in Elizabeth Schultz's *Unpainted to the Last:* Moby-Dick *and Twentieth-Century American Art* in 1995. Even more revealing than the multitude of illustrated editions discussed by Schultz in the first six chapters of her pioneering book was the extraordinary variety and plenitude of free-standing *Moby-Dick* artworks she surveyed in the next four chapters, from the abstract expressionists of the 1940s and 1950s (including Jackson Pollock, Robert Motherwell, Theodore Stamos, and Sam Francis) to more realistic and narrative artists (including Gil Wilson, Robert Del Tredici, Benton Spruance, Leonard Baskin, and Mark Milloff) and then on to such eclectic genre-bending artists as Jerry Beck, Vali Myers, Frank Stella, Walter Martin, and even Jean-Michel Basquiat. No one knew, or had even imagined, until Schultz published her book, how much art, of such extraordinary variety, often of the most compelling intensity, had been created in response to *Moby-Dick* in the twentieth century. This art was not only enjoyable to the eye as a supplement to the text in an illustrated edition or as a free-standing creation encountered in a public plaza, corporate lobby, or art museum where one had not expected

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to see it. As Schultz has shown, *Moby-Dick* art created in the twentieth century initiated a pictorial tradition in the interpretation of the novel comparable to that of literary critics who write with words.

Now Schultz's title, *Unpainted to the Last*, borrowed from Ch. 55 of *Moby-Dick*, is truer than ever. In the twenty years since she published her book, enough new high-quality *Moby-Dick* art has been created to fill a new book and more, not only in America but around the world. Schultz summarized much of this "New *Moby-Dick* Art" in her plenary address at the Tenth International Melville Society Conference, in Tokyo, in June 2015. Some twentieth-century artists, such as Robert Del Tredici, now in Montreal, and Mark Milloff, now in Providence, are themselves creating new *Moby-Dick* art in the twenty-first century. But they are far outnumbered by new artists in the field from throughout the United States as well as in England, Canada, France, Germany, the Netherlands, Italy, Greece, Russia, Israel, China, Japan, and no doubt from other "isles of the sea" and "ends of the earth." I like to think of *Unpainted to the Last* as our Old Testament in *Moby-Dick* and the arts, with the visual and performance art that has proliferated since its publication as the as yet uncanonized New Testament, spreading throughout the world in a variety of media and interpretive contexts. As Schultz noted in her talk in Japan, *Moby-Dick* art in the new century has been addressing new kinds of ecological, gender, postcolonial, economic, and popular culture concerns, while giving new attention to characters such as Queequeg, Pip, and the whale.

For many, the "flood-gates of the wonder-world" of *Moby-Dick* art opened in a new way at the First International Melville Society Conference, in Volos, Greece, in June 1997. Our local host, Thanasis Christodoulou, was a lawyer and the first translator of *Moby-Dick* into the Greek language. He was also, and remains today, an artist who interprets *Moby-Dick* visually in small, vivid, exquisite drawings which bring the spiritual aura of a Greek Orthodox icon to the philosophical restlessness of Melville's Ishmaelian quest. Christodoulou exhibited a sampling of his early *Moby-Dick* designs at the Volos conference and he has continued to make new drawings while also executing a pictorial narrative of Herman Melville's life from birth to death in dozens of panels illustrated with images from around the world. When several of us at the Volos conference saw Christodoulou's art, we began to dream of some kind of Melville gallery and cultural center at which such art could be collected and displayed. In 2001 this quest resulted in the creation of the Melville Society Archive as part of the Melville Society Cultural Project at the New Bedford Whaling Museum in Massachusetts. In recent years, Christodoulou has donated dozens of his original *Moby-Dick* drawings and a complete set of his Melville Pictorial Narrative to the Archive in New Bedford, where scholars can now come to study the pieces and to see them, from time to time, in Melville-related exhibitions.

Christodoulou's exhibition of *Moby-Dick* art at the First International Melville Society Conference opened a tradition that has continued at many subsequent conferences. At the Second Biennial Conference, at Mystic Seaport Museum, in 1999, Robert Del Tredici exhibited a number of brand-new screenprints created that year in addition to a wide selection of his earlier *Moby-Dick* pen-and-ink reproductions from the 1960s. The Third International Conference at Hofstra University in 2001 featured two

separate group exhibitions, each of which included works created before and after the publication of *Unpainted to the Last* (see the catalog *Artists after* Moby-Dick). At the Fifth International Conference in New Bedford in 2005, new *Moby-Dick* art by Mark Milloff, Aileen Callahan, and George Klauba was shown at the New Bedford Art Museum along with an exhibition devoted to Herman Melville and Frederick Douglass at the New Bedford Whaling Museum. The Sixth and Seventh International Conferences in Szczecin, Poland, in 2007, and in Jerusalem in 2009, did not feature stand-alone art exhibitions, but they did include several papers on Melville and art—as did the conference in Rome in 2011, whose presenters included *Moby-Dick* artists Claire Illouz from France and Tony de los Reyes from California. The Ninth International Conference in Washington, D.C., in 2013, included an exhibition of *Moby-Dick* drawings by Matt Kish, and the Tokyo conference in 2015 featured *Moby-Dick* paper cuts by New Bedford artist Peter Martin. Martin's work had itself been inspired by *Moby-Dick* paper cuts by the Chinese artist Qiao Xiaoguang he had seen in New Bedford in 2012.

Three of Qiao's massive paper cuts (ca. 2010) were among the collection of *Moby-Dick* art that Elizabeth Schultz donated to the New Bedford Whaling Museum in 2011. In *The Story of* Moby-Dick (Figure 1), the glorious white negative space of the whale shape dwarfs the forms of the minuscule male figures cut from the darkness that surrounds it. The floral decor inside the borders of the cetacaean shape further animates the organicism of the White Whale that Qiao clearly depicts as the ruling spirit of Melville's story.

One of the signal developments in the field of *Moby-Dick* and the arts since the publication of *Unpainted to the Last* in 1995 has been the increasing prominence of female artists responding to the novel. Vali Myers's *Moby Dick* drawing from 1972–74 is arguably the first great female interpretation of the novel—not only because of the gender of the artist but because of her full-length, unclothed self-portrait stretching across the foreground beneath the pipe dream she has projected of the furious, bleeding Moby Dick destroying the lives of the attacking men, the guilty humans reduced to black stitches in a swirling green sea. This is arguably

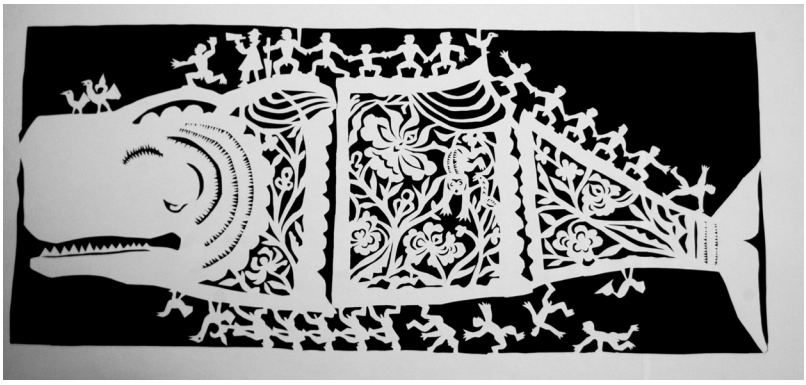

Figure 1. Qiao Xiaoguang, *The Story of* Moby-Dick, paper cut, black over white, 30×57 inches, 2010. Courtesy of the New Bedford Whaling Museum.

also the first great eco-feminist *Moby-Dick* painting, created long before that movement got its name in literary criticism, not only because Myers herself sided entirely with the whale in this primal combat but because the sides and corners of this painting are filled with loving depictions of the beloved creatures this Australian artist was sheltering and nurturing in the animal refuge she had established in a valley high above Positano on the southern Italian coast. Myers continued to deepen her eco-feminist engagement with *Moby-Dick* throughout her career, most notably in *Stella Maris*, completed in 1999, four years before her death, in which the newly bleeding White Whale, still furiously pursued by harmful but hapless men, one of which is strapped to the whale like Fedallah in the novel, occupies the upper right corner of a drawing whose teardrop center shows the view from Vali's valley down to the Mediterranean over which the Stella Maris, the pagan Queen of the Sea, sheds tears of anguish for the unsufferable cruelty and destruction mankind has inflicted on the creatures of the natural world. The catalog for *Between the Dusk and Dawn*, the exhibition of Myers drawings that toured Australia in 2013, ten years after death, is rich in *Moby-Dick* imagery, beginning with her 1970s self-portrait with the White Whale as its cover art (Myers, pp. 37–42, 50, 62, 71, 89, 94).

Only a handful of Americans had known of Vali Myers or her *Moby-Dick* drawings before Schultz published *Unpainted to the Last* in 1995. Since then female interpretations of *Moby-Dick* have been showing up everywhere, not only in visual art but in performance art such as Ellen Driscoll's multimedia theatrical piece titled *Ahab's Wife* at the Snug Harbor Cultural Center in 1998, Laurie Anderson's *Songs and Stories* of Moby-Dick in Brooklyn in 2003, and the Moby-Dick *Oratorio* that Molly Herron and three other thirty-something composers premiered in Brooklyn in 2014. Among the female visual artists who have been pursuing *Moby-Dick* in the early twenty-first century, Aileen Callahan is one of the most versatile and prolific. At the Hofstra conference in 2001, she exhibited a large semi-abstract oil painting of a *White Whale* on conjoined canvases. In New Bedford in 2005, this and other large-scale paintings of the whale were accompanied by several dozen smaller paintings depicting successive stages in *The Birth of Moby Dick*. Callahan in the decade since then has explored the skin of the whale in a series of charcoal drawings large in scale but minute in the detail. The lines and markings of her *Breaching Coil* (Figure 2), like the lines and markings of the skin of the whale in the chapter "The Blanket," suggest the visible surface, past life, and symbolic resonance of the living whale, inviting us to see with our inner and outer eyes at the same time.

Beginning in 2009 the Melville Society Archive in New Bedford has been acquiring original *Moby-Dick* art from at least one artist every year, and a number of these artists have been female. Our first acquisitions were *The Women of New Bedford,* a multimedia engraving by Kathleen Piercefield, and *The Whiteness*, an artist book by Claire Illouz. In 2006, Piercefield's *Women of New Bedford* had been reproduced as the cover art for the essay collection *Melville and Women*; her map of *The Voyage of the Pequod* was reproduced in the Longman Critical Edition of *Moby-Dick* in 2007. By 2009 Piercefield had created seventeen *Moby-Dick* artworks that were exhibited at Rockford Art Museum in Illinois alongside the thirty-nine *Moby-Dick* artworks that George Klauba had painted since 2003; one

Figure 2. Aileen Callahan, *Breaching Coil*, charcoal and chalk on paper, 17×24 inches, 2016. Reprinted by permission of the artist.

of her newest creations, a triptych of Pip's spiritual progress, was matched by Klauba's triptych of the same subject that he had painted independently at the same time.

The Whiteness by Claire Illouz is an artist book published in an edition of twenty-five copies that explores the subtleties of "The Whiteness of the Whale" as profoundly as any critic who has written with words. One way in which she does this is by printing selected paragraphs from that chapter in embossing without ink, so that you can read the shape of each letter in the white of the paper, but only with a sense of struggle and unease comparable to that of trying to plumb the full depths of Melville's verbal and philosophical thought in that chapter. Most of the words and drawings in this artist book are white on white, but one two-page spread is black on white, its deep black engraving in mezzotint surrounding the untouched white of the paper in the center that is the "negative space" of the whale. As your eye gets attuned to white on white, with that one burst of black, it is a shock to encounter the one two-page spread that is garishly colored, Illouz's homage to the passage in which "Nature . . . paints like the harlot" (see p. 157 herein). The visual subtlety and imaginative flair of this artist book is a fine complement to the charcoal drawing of *The Skin's Path* by Aileen Callahan that the Archive acquired in 2013.

In 2015 the archive acquired two watercolors by Vanessa Hodgkinson, an English artist and videographer who had sailed on the voyage of the whale ship *Charles W. Morgan* in June 2014. One of her projects on the voyage was to put herself in the position of one of the few women in the nineteenth century who are known to have successfully passed as a male sailor for the course of a voyage—and to covertly film a video that would document such an experience. Another was to create a series of watercolors directly inspired by the voyage. Two of those watercolors were the 2015 acquisition by the Melville Society Archive. Each was inspired, in part, by Vanessa's visit to the Martha's Vineyard Museum on the day before her voyage, where she examined the log book of the original voyage of the *Charles W. Morgan* from New Bedford in 1841. The keeper of that log had used a sidelong image of a whale to represent every creature caught, and uplifted flukes for each that got away. Hodgkinson's response was to contrast the drawing of a whale ship whose masts and rigging are filled with fast-fish that have been caught (*Catch of the Morgan*) with another whose vast blue ocean is full of the flukes of loose fish (*Those Who Got Away*). The video, the watercolors, and two photographic self-portraits with whales inspired directly by the voyage are part of the project she is calling *Whales Weep Not!*

One of the great things about studying artwork inspired by *Moby-Dick* is that you never know where or when you will discover one or more new works. More than once I have been surprised the way Ishmael is when he encounters the "nameless yeast" of that mesmerizing painting right inside the door of the Spouter-Inn. My most dramatic experience of that kind came in November 1989, immediately after I presented a paper on Melville, Turner, and Bulkington at a meeting of the Midwest Art Association in Cincinnati. Two artists in the audience invited me to join them on a walk down Fourth Street to see a show of work by Frank Stella and Yoko Ono at the Carl Solway Gallery. I did not then know anything about Frank Stella or the *Moby-Dick* series he had begun a few years earlier, but I was absolutely mesmerized by a huge mixed-media print, swimming with viscous energy, right inside the door. While my companions were admiring the artist's technical finesse, I wondered if this captivating abstract work had a title, which turned out to be *The Whale as Dish*. This was one of seven brand-new Wave prints that Stella had on display in this exhibition, and I was hooked. When I learned that he was creating one or more artworks for every chapter title, and became as intrigued by the painted metallic reliefs as I had been by the mixed-media prints, I was off on a quest that took me twice to Japan, twice to Europe, once to Canada, and throughout the United States to be able to see enough of the parts to be able to write about the whole. By the time I published my book on the series in 2000, I had seen about 129 of the 138 titles and about 177 of the 260 unique artworks. The retrospective exhibition of Stella's art that filled the fifth floor of the downtown Whitney Museum in New York from October 2015 to February 2016 included seven of Stella's *Moby-Dick* works among the hundred-plus works spanning his nearly sixty-year career. It was wonderful to see five of the metallic Moby reliefs and two of the mixed-media prints as part of the show, but relative to the series as a whole they reveal about as much as the hump of the whale does in proportion to the rest of the body below the water.

In the performing arts as well as the visual arts one never knows when a new *Moby-Dick* production will appear. When I read about Rinde Eckert's *And God Created Whales* in the *New York Times* in 2000, I managed to get to New York before it closed and have taken every opportunity to see it again since. Very few in the Melville world knew anything about Eckert before he wrote the script, composed the music, and sang and acted the role of Nathan. Nathan is a piano turner who is trying to complete a *Moby-Dick* opera before losing his mind to a neurological disorder; he is coached by his female African American muse modeled on his favorite operatic diva. Eckert's seventy-five-minute chamber opera, performed without intermission, was the best kind of theatrical adaptation, eliciting deep sympathy from the audience for Nathan's personal plight while riffing splendidly on *Moby-Dick* itself through the samples Nathan and his Muse perform from the opera-in-progress.

Equally surprising and stimulating to me was the *Moby-Dick* film by the Israeli filmmaker Guy Ben-Ner that came to the Contemporary Arts Center in Cincinnati in 2005 as part of the first retrospective of this young artist's career. Like Eckert, Ben-Ner wrote the script and plays one of two central roles. The other major role is played by the filmmaker's six-year-old daughter Elia. The entire film was made in Ben Ner's Tel Aviv kitchen in the year 2000, with the filmmaker and his daughter riffing on *Moby-Dick* throughout this twelve-minute work in which Buster Keaton–like slapstick alternates with keen insight into the novel itself as well as into the degree to which a collaboration like this between father and daughter inevitably raises power issues compared to those that can arise between a captain and sailors on a ship. Like Eckert's chamber opera, this playful art film is highly successful in its own artistic medium while also engaging with *Moby-Dick* and with life in our new century. Eckert's performance piece, written and performed a year before the September 11 attack on the World Trade Center, alludes Pip's castaway experience by imagining the fear you would feel if you plunged from a high building and were frozen halfway down, suspended in an unending moment of terror. Ben-Ner's film, made in the same year, echoes contemporary tensions between Israelis and Palestinians when first sharks, and then the spout of a whale, invade the Tel Aviv kitchen.

The most ambitious and successful musical adaptation in the new century is the *Moby-Dick* opera by composer Jake Heggie and librettist Gene Scheer that was premiered by the Dallas Opera in April 2010. Heggie was a songwriter who had considerable success with his opera *Dead Man Walking*, but few had expected him to choose *Moby-Dick* as the subject of an opera or to do so well with it (when he had first suggested it to the Dallas management he was asked if he could come up with something else). Scheer stayed very true to the spirit of the novel—and often to its text—while also having to make a number of painful departures from the book, the most radical of which was the need to eliminate the chapters on land to keep the length of the opera under three hours. A corollary to that decision was the need to create the shipboard equivalent of the early friendship between Ishmael and Queequeg on land. He and Heggie did this through invented scenes and arias that by the end of the opera make the multiracial bonding between these two characters, enriched by the

cross-gender casting of Pip as an African American soprano, into a multicultural trio whose emotional bond and global symbolism give tremendous warmth and hope to the opera in spite of the ending in which only Ishmael survives. This oceanic opera opens not with an American singing "Call me Ishmael" but with Queequeg chanting a Polynesian prayer. One unforgettable example of opera's power to both elevate and deepen the drama and emotion of a purely literary text is the aria Starbuck sings in the musket scene in Ahab's cabin at the end of Act 1, when he is unable to shoot the sleeping captain even though he knows that would be the only way to see his family again and bring his shipmates home.

One year after the premiere of Heggie and Scheer's opera, Matt Kish published *Moby-Dick in Pictures: One Drawing for Every Page*. The Signet edition that Kish used has 552 pages. Kish created one drawing for each page *every day*, most of them on "found paper" from discarded books. This book has been exceptionally successful commercially as well as in the classroom, and Kish had sold all 552 of the original drawings over the internet within a few years of publication. The Melville Society Archive acquired sixteen of those drawings in 2012 and in 2014 commissioned Kish to do a new set of drawings of *The Crew of the Pequod,* twelve individual portraits untethered to specific pages of the text. One might have expected Kish, who is a full-time librarian in Dayton, Ohio, to take a bit of a break from this first obsessive engagement with Melville's novel, but he created an amazing proliferation of new work for a joint show of *Moby-Dick* art with Robert Del Tredici opening at the Contemporary Arts Center in Cincinnati in April 2016. Kish's first new project for this new show was to create one drawing for each of the eighty "Extracts" at the beginning of the novel. The second was to depict each of the fourteen whales that Ishmael classifies in the "Cetology" chapter, each drawing on a sheet of paper corresponding to the relative size of the whale. Del Tredici was himself creating an impressive proliferation of new work for this joint exhibition—which included fifty prints on "metallic" paper he had created since November 2013, a new body of work that will be fascinating to contrast with his pen-and-ink designs of fifty years earlier. Kish's *Extracts 14* (Figure 3) alludes richly to much more than the text from Lord Bacon's *History of Life and Death* it embeds and contextualizes.

Like Ishmael in the "Cetology" chapter, I have devoted myself in the present essay primarily to *Moby-Dick* art that I have seen with my own eyes and heard with my own ears. I am told there are twenty-first-century *Moby-Dick* operas by Dutch and Polish composers but I have had no chance to hear them. I live in northern Kentucky across the Ohio River from Cincinnati, only a two-hour drive from Columbus, Ohio, which hosted two separate *Moby-Dick* exhibitions in late 2015 that I was unfortunately unable to attend. The principle that you never know where *Moby-Dick* art will surface next has held true even in my own classroom, where I have taught courses in *Moby-Dick* and the Arts since 1992. Fred North, an art major in my 1994 course, asked if he could create an artwork rather than write a research paper at the end of the semester, and the two "Lee Shore" paintings he created inspired me to offer that option to students in every subsequent class. The exhibition I co-curated with former student Emma Rose Thompson at the Covington Public Library on the

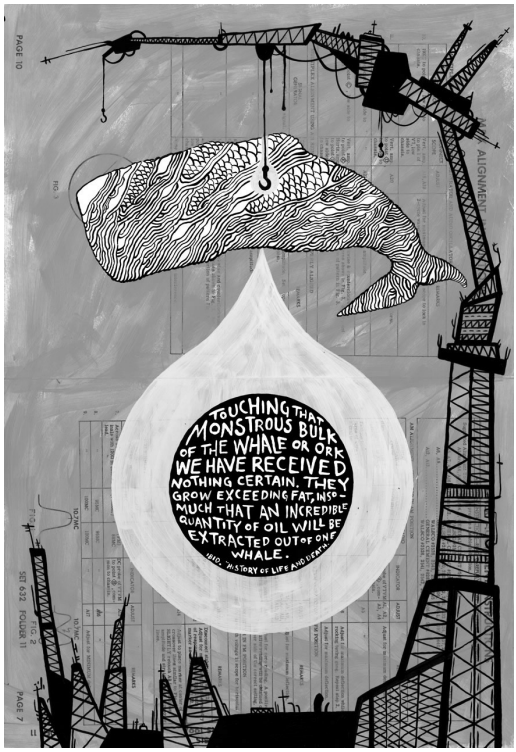

Figure 3. Matt Kish, *Extract 14*, acrylic paint on found paper, 10⅞×15¾ inches, August 19, 2015. Reprinted by permission of the artist.

Kentucky side of the river in April and May 2015 featured one hundred five *Moby-Dick* artworks created by fifty-three students, beginning with Fred, over a twenty-year period. Among those classroom creations were works by Kathleen Piercefield I mentioned earlier. In April 2016, she teamed with five other local artists, plus Claire Illouz from France, Aileen Callahan from Boston, and animation artist Julia Oldham from Oregon, in a nine-woman *Moby-Dick* show at the Marta Hewett Gallery in Cincinnati that ran concurrently with the two-man Kish and Del Tredici show at the Contemporary Arts Center.

I close with these five *Moby-Dick* shows in Columbus, Covington, and Cincinnati within a one-year period to demonstrate how pervasive *Moby-Dick* art can be in places where you would not necessarily expect to see or hear it. In this essay, as in Ishmael's "Extracts," I have had room to present only a "glancing bird's eye view of what has been promiscuously" painted, performed, and composed by *Moby-Dick* artists over the first fifteen years of the twenty-first century. By the time this third Norton Critical edition goes into its next printing, who knows how much more *Moby-Dick* art will have been created, by whom, and where?

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JONATHAN LETHEM

Moby-Dick†

You know *Moby-Dick* before you know it. You feel it coming before you read it, like Ishmael in the book, enduring the global duration of the voyage and suffering the thrill and agony of delay of the title character's actual appearance. The title alone is a cultural "meme"—Elvis Presley, in his "Comeback Special," in 1968, raises his microphone stand like a harpoon and sneer-shouts it—"Moby Dick." He raises a laugh of recognition from a crowd of fans in a TV studio. You might be a John Huston completist or an Orson Welles partisan or a Ray Bradbury fan and come into contact with the 1956 film. You might read the Classic Comic, or come across one of any number of the paraphrases or references that trickle through popular culture.

Or you might be me, who walked into a stranger's downtown renovated loft one night—I was there not on any literary or bookish errand, but because I'd been promised a good dance party—to find a wall of four or five long bookshelves. I always step up to bookshelves when I visit a home for the first time; it's probably rude, but I can't stop myself. These shelves, astonishingly, consisted of nothing but different editions of *Moby-Dick*. Hundreds of them. It was a kind of parlor trick or art installation; anyway, one of the most breathtaking surprises I've ever seen in my book-loving life. What did these shelves mean, to the person—the book-collector as obsessed Ahab—who'd assembled them? Was he or she satisfied yet? Probably not.

My stepmother, when I was fifteen, was keen on whales, on saving them, of course, but also on taking whale-watching boat tours in the Atlantic, listening to humpback songs on scratchy LPs, and on rereading *Moby-Dick* once a year. She claimed it was best read "just for the story," and that this could easily be accomplished by simply skipping every other chapter. Now, this isn't strictly true, not even close; the philosophy and epistemology and ontology and also the freaky poetical crypto-zoological musings interpenetrate the "story," just as the story interpenetrates many of the (seemingly) digressive "fugue" chapters. But her suggestion strongly shaped my first

† Written for this Norton Critical Edition.

reading, which came five or six years later—the point being, you're here, too, dear reader, with expectations, anticipations, your breath held, your narrative-seeking brain boiling helplessly with "spoilers."

Well, then, if you are lucky enough to be reading *Moby-Dick* for the first time, you'll find the book can encompass every one of these—Engulf and Devour them, one and all—and satisfy and discharge every impulse that brought you, and that you brought, to its opening page. It takes up such a ridiculous amount of space in the cultural imagination for the very simplest of reasons: for the amount of space it occupies in the private imagination of each individual reader. *Moby-Dick* installs itself in your brain as a kind of second brain, bigger than that which contains it, much like swallowing an ocean of language and implication. And that, in turn, connects your engorged mental container to all the others, through time, that have made the same encounter. As the whale is too big for Ahab or Ishmael to fully digest in their apprehension and awe, so is the book to our literary imagination. The unknown reader who filled those shelves (as I've begun, slowly, to do in emulation—I have twelve or fifteen different editions now) was trying to explain what had happened to him—those fathomless shelves were an externalized model of a book which *is itself a hologram of consciousness*, in its variousness and paradox, endlessly altered each time it touches the world and at each point where it mysteriously contacts itself.

ROGER PAYNE

Melville's Disentangling of Whales†

I first heard the song of a whale in the engine room of a wooden minesweeper—the sister ship of Cousteau's first *Calypso*. Frank Watlington, a Bermudian acoustics engineer used the ship to tow hydrophones (underwater microphones) through which he listened for distant test explosions of dynamite. During such work he often heard sounds from an unknown source that he nevertheless guessed correctly to be humpback whales. The reason he thought whales might be the authors of those sounds was because he heard them only during months when humpbacks were migrating past Bermuda and because the sounds were so loud and so low it seemed obvious that whatever made them had to be big. I met Frank on my first visit to Bermuda, and he invited me to join him for a trip aboard his institute's research vessel. It was the beginning of a lifelong friendship Once on board he took me to the engine room where there was a reel-to-reel tape recorder. A deafeningly loud diesel generator was roaring away next to it, but Frank took a tape from his pocket, threaded it across the recorder heads, hit *Start* and handed me some headphones. As I put them on he leaned in close, and almost shouting to be heard above the shattering noise from the generator, said: "I think these may be humpback whale sounds."

Although the listening environment could hardly have been worse (like hearing a lullaby while standing next to a jet engine at full revs), the sounds I heard were astounding. I was completely unprepared for such a performance. It was unlike anything in nature that I had ever heard. As I

† Written for this Norton Critical Edition.

listened I realized that the world had no idea whales were capable of such bold virtuosity, and if whales were indeed the authors of those sounds (as we later showed) it was clear that humans and whales share a startlingly similar musical aesthetic. Theirs were bold, daring performances, with heroic riffs, soaring arias, and soul-shattering base notes—more oceanic exhalations than euphonious tones. I wished I had Melville's ability to describe such declamatory masterpieces. My mind was racing; I knew that people were killing thirty-three thousand whales each year and that several whale species were threatened with extinction. I had been searching for a way to make the magnitude of that crime manifest, and it dawned on me that if I did my part well, the whales' voices had power enough to capture the hearts of the world—thereby becoming the whales' salvation.

It seemed clear that here was something powerful enough to install whales in human consciousness more strongly than they had ever commanded such a place before. Years later I expressed that thought this way:[1]

> I feel that Melville . . . fully understood the role whales might serve in human consciousness if they could ever be properly installed there. It is clear that he knew how to position them best to penetrate the defences of the human imagination. I have wondered whether the underlying genius of *Moby Dick* isn't that Melville knew just how and by what steps whales would enter our minds, and how once inside, would metastasize and diffuse throughout the whole engine of human ingenuity, mastering and predisposing it to their purpose.
>
> And I think he knew that having penetrated the last defences of the system, that whales would reconstitute themselves, re-integrate at the point of origin of all the meridians of the imagination, its very pole, and there tie themselves forever into human consciousness by a kind of zenith knot.

Might not Melville have perceived that when this process had completed itself the whale as symbol would have become the whale as puppeteer—would start orchestrating, manipulating, and directing the connections that people perceive between themselves and the beating heart of nature? I feel that Melville came closer than anyone has ever come to demonstrating that whales can help humanity save itself—help us make the transition from *Save the Whales* to *Saved by the Whales*.

In *Moby-Dick*, Captain Ahab meets his nemesis in a whale. I think it more appropriate that whales are our apotheosis than our nemesis. I suspect that Melville would have agreed with that view, in spite of his nineteenth-century opinions about whales. For he, of all people, would surely have known the old Chinese proverb: "Go to the heart of danger—and there you shall find safety."

I wrote papers on the songs of humpback, blue, and fin whales and how their deepest notes once carried across entire oceans before ships' noise appeared and drowned them out, reducing by several hundred-fold the distance at which they are audible. During that work I took every opportunity to try to build whale songs into human culture by playing them to musicians, composers, dancers, writers, poets, playwrights, priests, philosophers, and anyone who had ears and could fog a mirror. The result

1. Roger Payne, *Among Whales* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1995), p. 325.

was that whale songs started and then fueled the *Save the Whales* movement. Whale-watching began and was soon contributing more to the world's economy than whale oil and meat ever have. But as all this was taking place I kept thinking . . . if only Melville were alive, how vastly more the whales, the wild world, and we would have benefited from how he would have handled the fact that whales sing.

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